MEETING THE NEEDS OF NATIVE HAWAIIAN STUDENTS AT WAIʻANAE HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

Waiʻanae High School has been considered a low performing school since 2002 (State of Hawaii Department of Education, 2012). Despite having a majority of Hawaiian, or other indigenous ethnicity, students (Waiʻanae High School, 2015), cultural perspectives about learning and education are not considered a factor in conversations about curriculum and instruction. Students all across campus are not excited about learning and traditional instructional practices do not seem to be effective. Our current approach to supporting students focuses on how to help them be more successful in a western system rather than how we can shift our practices to be more culturally responsive to students and allow them to succeed based on their own strengths.

The prevailing narrative that exists with regard to Native Hawaiians especially in the realm of education is deficits-based and focuses on the disparities in academic achievement between Native Hawaiian students and other ethnicities. Part of my responsibility as a Native Hawaiian educator, and now researcher, is to add to that narrative an alternative perspective. The purpose of this study was to better understand student experiences in order to identify ways that teachers can better support the needs of Native Hawaiian students at Waiʻanae High School. My goal was to illuminate the student voice and offer a perspective that is often absent from discussions about how to improve teaching and learning. I sought to describe the "*lived experiences"* of students based on the commonalities that surfaced in the stories of alumni.

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(Ngum, 1992)

E Wai‘anae is a mele (song) I learned to dance when I was about 11 years old. I was so excited to finally get to learn an ‘auana (modern) song that was popular on the radio. My kumu hula (hula teacher) explained to us how important it was to know about history, protocol, and culture and that was how she selected the mele she taught us. We learned mostly kahiko (ancient, old-style) songs, and the few ‘auana songs we knew were also older and not necessarily popular songs I would hear on the radio. I was happy that I would finally be able to dance to a song that I heard on the radio like many of my friends did. When my kumu explained why she wanted us to learn this song, it was even more special for me.

The lyrics speak of the plants, the breezes, and the light rains that belong to Wai‘anae. My kumu shared how the mele highlights the beauty of this place and the love that people have for our community. She further explained that we are like the maile and palapalai ferns that come from this place because we each have our own beauty. Our kuleana (responsibility) is to portray the beauty of this place through the work we do and the way we greet others. My work is a “labor of love.” I am dedicated to bringing out the best in students and revealing the beauty in this place. I use excerpts from this mele in the following chapters to connect the ideas to my own learning experiences and the reason this study is important.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Anoʻai iā ʻoe e Waiʻanae
A greeting to you o Waiʻanae

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(Ngum, 1992)

Such beauty exists in this place, my home, Waiʻanae. The first verse of the mele E Waiʻanae makes me want to be in this place where the breezes are fragrant and you can relax in the shade. It also leaves me hoping others will see the beauty that lives here. This verse invites the audience in to listen and experience the story told through the lyrics. I invite readers to experience my story, and through it I would like to convey the beauty that exists in this place.

When I was five years old, my grandmother took me to my first hula (dance) class and I remember being nervous, but so excited. My experiences in an academic environment began at about the same time and ran parallel to learning hula. Since then, and probably even before then, I loved being a student of any kind. My kumu hula incorporated so many powerful instructional practices into each of our classes. However, at the time, I did not recognize her strengths, or think of her as a teacher. I did not consider hula to be a learning experience in the same way that I saw school. Despite not practicing hula or taking a class for over twenty years, I still remember

most of what I learned in my hālau (school for hula). While I have definitely grown in academia, it is not as easy to recall much of what happened in school.

After becoming an educator, I began to think deeply about how to help students learn. I was taught pedagogy and curriculum in college, but it did not seem to help all my students grow in my classes. A variety of initiatives have been launched at Waiʻanae High School to increase student achievement, including professional development on instructional and assessment practices, but there are still a large number of students not successfully completing courses. As a teacher and a community member, my goal has always been to help support students and their growth. As a researcher seeking ways to help my students, I now realize some of the practices my kumu employed to teach us hula are the same types of practices that can be used to help students learn in classes like English and Math. My work in this dissertation is a quest to find more answers to the questions I have about how I can help students the way my kumu helped me.

The narrative told about students and schools in Hawaiʻi, especially about Native Hawaiian students, often highlights their deficits. My hope is to eventually change the story by tackling the issues in education from a strengths-based approach. However, in order to know where we are going, we must know where we have been. Therefore, I present the current version of the story that is focused on deficits, to recognize how to move beyond and to craft a new narrative that highlights strengths.

Schools and students in Hawaiʻi are not meeting annual yearly progress goals (Kanaʻiaupuni & Ishibashi, 2003). Native Hawaiian students perform well below the state averages in measures of student achievement and are overrepresented in the statistics around chronic absenteeism, retention rate, and special education (Hawaiʻi State Department of

Education, 2016b). "Hawaiian students are among the most underprivileged in the public school system, with the lowest test scores and graduation rates, and disproportionately high rates of grade retention, special education, and absenteeism" (Kanaʻiaupuni & Ishibashi, 2003, p. 33).

The U.S. Department of Education (2001) defines a focus school as:

- A Title I school that has the largest within-school gaps between the highest-achieving subgroup or subgroups and the lowest-achieving subgroup or subgroups or, at the high school level, has the largest within-school gaps in graduation rates ("within-school gaps" focus school); or
- A Title I school that has a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement or, at the high school level, low graduation rates ("low-achieving subgroup" focus school).

Hawaiʻi was awarded a Race to the Top grant in 2010 and one component of the state's comprehensive plan was to target "struggling schools and students" (Hawaiʻi State Department of Education, 2017, para. 7). Zones of School Innovation were established in two most rural areas of the state with large populations of Native Hawaiian and economically disadvantaged students (Hawaiʻi State Department of Education, 2017). Waiʻanae High School is in one of the two zones of school innovation (Hawaiʻi State Department of Education, 2017).

Waiʻanae High School is designated as a Title I school and, in 2012, was identified as a focus school because it was one of the lowest performing schools in the state (Hawaiʻi State Department of Education, 2014b). In school year 2013-2014, 59.2% of the student population was made up of Native Hawaiian students (Hawaiʻi State Department of Education, 2015b). Recent standardized test scores show these students performed below average when compared to other ethnic groups (Hawaiʻi State Department of Education, 2016b). One inference that can be made from this data is the reason that the school is one of the lowest performing is because

Hawaiian students are not being successful. Further, a conclusion can be made that Native Hawaiian students are not finding success in the public school system, especially at Waiʻanae High School.

According to Kanaʻiaupuni and Ishibashi (2003), "Hawaiian children consistently lag behind the 'average' student and are deprived of opportunities for intellectual engagement, social growth, and other aspects of quality education that help to pave the way to fulfilling futures" (p. 33). This suggests that a disconnect exists between what we are offering in public education and what effectively helps Native Hawaiian students learn and grow. All of these statistics beg the question: Why? What are the reasons that Hawaiian students are not finding success in school?

The statistics regarding Native Hawaiian students are often presented from a deficit perspective. Low test scores and traditional academic success are rarely discussed as being related to different epistemologies or values. More often, when students are not successful in school, the assumptions are that they are not as intelligent, they lack skills, or they are deficient in some way. "Deficits-based approaches often miss the expertise that exists in our communities and families, viewing instead outside experts as the only ones capable of "fixing" our problems …drawing on the strengths of individuals is the best way to reduce the negative and increase the positive in individuals and families" (Kanaʻiaupuni, Ledward, & Jensen, 2010, p. 29). Further, Taylor (2013) suggests that having an optimistic outlook makes it more likely than an individual will look for strengths in others rather than focusing on the things that they do not do well. Perhaps the challenges facing Native Hawaiian students are a result of focusing solely on how to fix the things that are deficits rather than trying to understand how to capitalize on strengths.

Problem Statement

In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act required states to develop a system to hold schools accountable for making "adequate yearly progress (AYP) in math and reading, participation, and proficiency, graduation/retention rates, as well as other educational indicators, such as teacher qualifications" (Hawai'i State Department of Education, 2012). Wai'anae High School did not make adequate yearly progress in any of the years from 2002 through 2012. "Schools that do not make adequate yearly progress for five consecutive years must engage in restructuring to improve student learning" (Hassel, Hassel, Arkin, Kowal, & Steiner, 2006, p. 3). Schools in restructuring status had five different options for how to improve student performance. These options included becoming a charter school, replacing the staff and principal, having an outside entity run the school, having a state agency run the school, or participating in another "major restructuring that makes fundamental reforms" (Hassel, Hassel, Arkin, Kowal, & Steiner, 2006, p. 3).

Wai'anae High School adopted many different programs and reform practices over the 15 years that I have been teaching (Wai'anae High School, 2015). Most recently, Wai'anae High School was assigned "an external lead turnaround partner" to "audit the quality and fidelity of school turnaround initiatives and implementation" (Hawai'i State Department of Education, 2011, p. 12). Each of these efforts came with a set of "best practices" for instruction, and teachers have received a wealth of professional development on a variety of different topics each year from these external partners. However, most have not been completely successful in improving outcomes for our students. This is evidenced in year after year of not making adequate yearly progress based on the State of Hawai'i's criteria for school performance.

As a teacher, I embraced the professional development I received. While not everything was effective in my classroom and I did not always completely agree with what I learned from consultants, I tried my best to implement the new strategies and encouraged others to try them also. Recently, my role has changed from classroom teacher to instructional coach. One of my new responsibilities in this support role is meeting and planning with consultants and then supporting teachers after they receive training.

At the same time I started in my new role as academic coach, I began to learn more about culture-based education and culturally responsive pedagogy. As I walked through classrooms and debriefed with these consultants, I began to see things from a very different perspective even though the recommendations they provided were consistent with research-based best practices. A disconnect between western and indigenous ways of learning became apparent to me and I began to understand that what I thought I knew about effective educational practices was not always consistent with cultural ways of knowing.

I help teachers utilize more effective practices as part of my job. Santamaria and Santamaria (2012) state, "Scholars who consider leadership for social justice explore ways in which leaders in education can shift their perspectives deliberately attempting to see situations through the eyes of others with alternative points of view" (p. 10). Despite that fact that a majority of the students at Waiʻanae High School are Native Hawaiian, or some other indigenous, non-white ethnicity (Waiʻanae High School, 2015), cultural perspectives about learning and education are not considered a factor in conversations about curriculum and instruction. The absence of a cultural perspective may limit the types of instructional practices implemented and result in students' lack of excitement about learning.

"Everyday discussions in education casually throw out as self-evident facts that indigenous, minority, and low-income children are difficult to teach and low achieving" (Kana'iaupuni, Ledward, & Jensen, 2010, p. 28). This is true of discussions about students at Wai'anae High School, but the consensus is that this is due to low-reading ability, lack of academic readiness, or some other deficiency. This deficiency has led to a variety of interventions and shuffling of resources to help close the gaps our students face. The focus on these deficits "works its way into a classist agenda that disfavors poor and/or indigenous populations" (Kana'iaupuni, Ledward, & Jensen, 2010, p. 29). Culture and more indigenous ways of knowing never come up in our discussions about how to support students. Our current approach to supporting students focuses on how to help them be more successful in a western system rather than how we can shift our practices to be more culturally responsive to students and allow them to succeed based on their own strengths.

Researcher – Insight and Intent

Native Hawaiians have lower incomes; higher rates of suicide, child abuse, and arrests; higher rates of illnesses like heart disease, diabetes and cancer; and have lower life expectancies than other ethic groups in Hawai'i (Kamehameha Schools, 2014). In addition, education outcomes for Native Hawaiians are lower compared to other groups in the state.

> About one in four young Native Hawaiian adults is enrolled in college, compared to one in three young adults statewide. The proportion of Native Hawaiian adults with a bachelor's degree or higher is roughly half the statewide average (14 percent compared to 30 percent). (Kamehameha Schools, 2014, p. 4)

My own experiences as an educator with regard to traditional academic success support the data concerning graduation rates, achievement scores on standardized tests, and overall poor

performance in terms of traditional Western measures. As a classroom teacher, my students were often disconnected and disengaged with the way in which school was being offered to them. However, my students were different people when they were given the opportunity to learn in more relevant contexts and could apply the knowledge and skills they were developing. Students were able to grasp information more easily and more deeply when it was presented in a more integrated and relevant way. For example, students understood math so much better when its concepts were taught as a part of a bigger lesson such as in building and construction, or culinary arts.

In my research, I wanted to find out if students were able to express the types of learning experiences that were most beneficial for them in an effort to impact instructional practices and ultimately improve student growth. My hope is that by impacting and improving education, there will be future impact on other issues that affect the Native Hawaiian community such as poverty, substance abuse, and chronic health problems.

My goal in this study was to find out what alumni think about their educational experiences. Additionally, this study examined alumni engagement in the learning process. My goals stem from my experience in seeing students become increasingly apathetic about school and disengage from the learning process. At Waiʻanae High School, in addition to high rates of tardiness and absenteeism, classroom observations show that there are a large number of students who are not engaged at any given time in the lesson. As a school, we experienced some small successes when we implemented smaller learning communities, however these successes occurred in pockets across campus and for only some teachers.

Being able to show how things connect and applying concepts in context, is more engaging for students (Kana'iaupuni & Kawai'ae'a, 2008). Based on my observations of students

working on integrated projects outside of the traditional classroom, this is true for students at Waiʻanae High School. Ultimately, through this study, I wanted to know how to better help teachers help students. I also wanted to find out if there is a need to change the structure of courses and curriculum. Is it beneficial to offer a more integrated approach, such as place- or project-based learning, as supported by past studies and my classroom observations?

Given that changing the world is not feasible for a capstone project at the end of a three-year journey of learning and discovery, this project is the first of many steps that must be taken to eventually change the world for the students and community I am committed to serving. Having access to a good education allowed me to pursue opportunities that may not be available for others. I was able to choose my career path and what I did after high school. Because I was adequately prepared, I had choices about the type of job I wanted and was not limited because I was lacking skills. The same is not always true for children that attend Waiʻanae High School. It is my responsibility to improve what happens in classrooms so that others have the same options for their future as I did.

Significance of the Study

As previously stated, the prevailing narrative that exists with regard to Native Hawaiians, especially in the realm of education, is deficits-based and focuses on the disparities in academic achievement between Native Hawaiian students and other ethnicities. Part of my responsibility as a Native Hawaiian educator, and now researcher, is to add an alternative perspective to that narrative. Kanaʻiaupuni (2004) states:

> Native Hawaiians can enter the fray and enter loudly. The native voice is crucial because, though past and present political rhetoric may seek to undermine it, Hawaiian ʻculture exists despite our good intentions, ignorance or apathy. It exists because we doʼ (p. 28).

Wai‘anae High School has been the focus of reform efforts for many years because of poor performance, and data has been collected by several external entities to determine root causes for achievement gaps as well as to identify possible remedies. Despite these efforts, Native Hawaiian students at Wai‘anae High School are still not realizing academic success (Accountability Section, Assessment and Accountability Branch, Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, 2015). This study is the contribution of my voice, and the voices of alumni, into the conversation about how to better meet the needs of Native Hawaiian students. As shared in the prologue, this is my labor of love aimed at highlighting the strength that comes from the beautiful voices of the participants.

Research Questions

The goal of this study was to answer the following research questions:

- How can teachers better support the needs of Native Hawaiian students at Wai‘anae High School?
- What learning experiences at Wai‘anae High School were most effective in contributing to student growth?

Overview of Methodology

In this study, I focused on the experiences of alumni and their perspectives captured through interviews. Various consultants have worked at Wai‘anae High School and collected data ranging from curriculum maps through teacher and student interviews. The State requires students to complete tripod surveys as a means to evaluate their teachers and the data is used as a component of teacher evaluations (Hawa‘i State Department of Education, 2016a). However, data that digs deep into what students think about what helped them learn the best has not been collected. Some teachers assume that students do not know how to learn or do not care about

learning. Conversely, my own discussions with students suggest that they have opinions about their education. They can provide a knowledge and insight that we have not yet captured. Because they are the receivers of these experiences, I think their perspectives are very important.

I collected data through a combination of individual and focus group interviews with alumni from Wai‘anae High School. Participants represented each of the six career pathways student can focus on during their high school careers in order to capture any differences between pathways.

Definitions of Terms

Student Growth. The U.S. Department of Education defines student growth as a "change in student achievement for an individual student between two or more points in time" (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Support. Merriam-Webster offers several definitions for the word support depending on part of speech and context. Support when used as a verb is defined, "to provide help or encouragement to" (Support, Merriam-Webster.com, 2017). When used as a noun support is, "the act of showing that you believe that someone or something is good and acceptable; the act of helping someone by giving love, encouragement, etc." (Support, Merriam-Webster.com, 2017). For the purpose of this study, support is defined based on the context shared by participants and can mean any one of the definitions presented.

Learning Experiences. Learning experiences are any events, whether they occur in school or not, where a student acquires some type of knowledge or skill. The Glossary of Education Reform (Abbott, 2013) states:

> Learning experience refers to any interaction, course, program, or other experience in which learning takes place, whether it occurs in traditional academic settings (schools,

classrooms), or nontraditional settings (outside-of-school locations, outdoor environments) or whether it includes traditional educational interactions (students learning from teachers and professors) or nontraditional interactions (students learning through games and interactive software application.

Needs. Smith, Gregory, and Pugh (1981) developed the Statements About Schools (SAS) inventory to "assess how a well a school is satisfying the needs of its students as judged by both its students and teachers" (p. 561). The SAS measured four categories of needs that aligned to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Smith, Gregory, & Pugh, 1981; Maslow & Frager, 1987). "Security" needs are met when students have a safe and stable environment (Smith, Gregory, & Pugh, 1981, p. 561). "Social" needs are measured by the extent to which students feel a sense of belonging and the level to which students are able to develop relationships with peers and adults (Smith, Gregory, & Pugh, 1981, p. 561). "Esteem" needs are met when students feel successful and are able to meet achievement goals (Smith, Gregory, & Pugh, 1981, p. 561). Finally, "self-actualization" needs are measured how well students are able to meet personal goals and grow in "satisfying ways" (Smith, Gregory, & Pugh, 1981, p. 561). For the purpose of this paper, the term needs is used to address all four of these categories and is based on the context used by participants when discussing their own needs.

Native Hawaiian. The term Native Hawaiian as defined by the United States Congress in 20 USC §7517 and in the Native Hawaiian Education Act is:

Any individual who is:

(a) a citizen of the United States; and

(b) a descendent of the aboriginal people who, prior to 1778, occupied and exercised sovereignty in the area that now comprises the State of Hawai‘i, as evidenced by

(i) genealogical records;

(ii) kupuna (elders) or Kamaʻaina (long-term community residents) verification; or

(iii) certified birth records (20 USC §7517)

(iv) The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (2015b) explains Native Hawaiian with an upper case "N" is used to describe anyone with Hawaiian ancestry regardless of blood quantum and native Hawaiian with a lower case is used to refer to those with at least 50% Hawaiian blood quantum. For the purpose of this dissertation, the terms Hawaiian and Native Hawaiian are used to refer to any individuals who are of Hawaiian ancestry.

Indigenous. Merriam-Webster online defines indigenous as "produced, growing, living, or occurring naturally in a particular region or environment" (Indigenous, Merriam-Webster.com, 016). The United Nations (2007) references a working definition of indigenous peoples found in the Martinez Cob Study, which is:

> Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system (Secretariat of the Permanent Forum, 2004).

The United Nations Declaration (2013) also states:

> Indigenous peoples each have unique and distinctive cultures, languages, legal systems and histories. Most indigenous peoples have a strong connection to the environment and their traditional lands and territories. They also often share legacies of removal from traditional lands and territories, subjugation, destruction of their cultures, discrimination and widespread violations of their human rights. Through centuries, they have suffered from the non-recognition of their own political and cultural institutions and the integrity of their cultures has been undermined. Indigenous peoples are also harmfully impacted by development processes, which pose a grave threat to their continued existence (Gargett & Kiss, 2013, p. 3).

Overview of the Dissertation

In the chapters that follow, I will hope to share experiences of students at Waiʻanae High school through the participants' stories. Chapter 1 provided readers with pertinent background information and context for the study. This chapter also included the research questions and an overview of the methodology.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature. The chapter begins with information about education in Hawaiʻi and Waiʻanae. Also included is a synthesis of the literature on indigenous epistemology, culturally relevant pedagogy, and culture based education. This chapter provides a foundation for the discussion of the findings and implications presented in the chapters that follow.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology used in this study. It includes a description of the qualitative narrative ethnography action research method. In this chapter, I discuss my data collection and analysis process, and limitations of the study.

Chapter 4 offers the findings and data collected from the research. Findings from each group of participants and the focus group are presented followed by a discussion of themes that emerged in all groups.

Chapter 5 is the final chapter and gives a summary of the research. I discuss the major themes that emerged from the study and how they connect with existing research. Implications for practice and future research are included in this chapter.

Summary

"Native Hawaiians traditionally view the world by looking at what came before because the past is rich in knowledge and wisdom that must inform the perspectives and actions in the present and future" (Kamehameha Schools, 2014, p. 1). This chapter gave some contextual information about the place and myself as the researcher necessary to "inform" this study. In the next chapter, existing literature is presented as it is part of the "knowledge and wisdom" that is critical to building the foundation for my research and understanding how the results of the study can inform the future (Kamehameha Schools, 2014, p. 1).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Merriam-Webster states that knowledge is, "the sum of what is known; the body of truth, information, and principles acquired by human kind" (Knowledge, Merriam-Webster, 2016). The construction and development of knowledge, and the ability to make meaning from information requires access to "the body of truth" (Knowledge, Merriam-Webster, 2016). Kanaʻiaupuni (2004) discusses the social nature of the construction of knowledge and points out that human element involved in science lends to subjectivity. Determining what constitutes knowledge and truth is far from objective and requires careful consideration of the information available. Careful review of existing research is necessary in order to better understand my research question and make meaning of the data collected in my study. This literature review aims to provide a body of information to illuminate perspectives, facts as presented by other scholars, on topics including:

- Education in Hawaiʻi
- Education at Waiʻanae High School
- Indigenous epistemology and perceptions of education
- Native Hawaiian cultural ways of knowing
- Instructional practices and culturally relevant pedagogy

The literature in this chapter presents the story about education as it relates to Native Hawaiian students. Bower (1976) outlined a story framework present in traditional storytelling that leads to greater understanding. The story begins with the setting and the state of the world that exists (Mandler & Johnson, 1977). The first two sections of the chapter describe the educational setting that exists for Native Hawaiian students, more specifically students at Waiʻanae High School, and presents the deficits that exist. The predominant lens through which most literature about Native Hawaiian, and other minority, students is presented is a deficit-

based lens. The second half of stories focuses on events that lead to a desired outcome, or resolution (Bower, 1976). The last three sections in this chapter discuss literature about Native Hawaiian, and other indigenous students, to present the possibilities for more desirable outcomes.

Education in Hawai‘i

The educational system in Hawai‘i is filled with challenges related to what Kana‘iaupuni (2004) refers to as “deficit approaches in indigenous education” (p. 26). Kana‘iaupuni (2004) discusses differing perspectives about Polynesian navigation to highlight the strengths of indigenous knowledge and calls for “a new framework that brings to the fore Native Hawaiian strengths that have been too long misinterpreted, misrecognized, and undervalued” (p. 26). Some scientists and historians believed that the discovery of the Hawaiian Islands by Polynesians was accidental (Kana‘iaupuni, Ledward, & Jensen, 2010). Kana‘iaupuni (2004) points out that only after the successful voyage of the Hōkūle‘a did western scientists “accept the accomplishments of Native Hawaiians” (p. 26) and recognize that Native Hawaiians “mastered the science of navigating across the World’s largest expanse of ocean long before the western world” (p. 26). A deficit-based approach to education in Hawai‘i overlooks the “expertise that exists in our communities and families” (Kana‘iaupuni, Ledward, & Jensen, 2010, p. 29) and places more value on the knowledge of outsiders.

The problem of engaging Native Hawaiian students in Western forms of learning began before the establishment of schools and an educational system (Kawakami, 1999). According to Kawakami (1999), after western contact “Native Hawaiians experienced vast social, economic, political, and cultural dislocation” (p. 19). The political and social changes that took place after 1778 had a profound effect on education and systems of education in Hawai‘i. The public school

system, established in 1845, grew and developed amidst the political changes happening in the Hawaiian Kingdom. By the 1900s, the Hawaiian language was banned from schools and was slowly replaced by English in communities. Native Hawaiian students did not find success in schools after culture and language were excluded (Kawakami, 1999). When the cultures of home and school are disconnected the quality of learning is affected and lack of achievement is interpreted as a deficit of the student (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Jensen, 1969).

According to more recent literature, the story of the education of Native Hawaiians has not changed significantly over time. "Study after study documents the disparities in achievement between indigenous and other students, as well as the correlation between their low socioeconomic status and outcomes related to low achievement and conduct disorders" (Kana'iaupuni, 2004, p. 26). One example is the Smarter Balance Assessment (SBA), which is administered to students in Hawai'i's public schools to measure achievement in reading and math (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2015a). On the 2015 assessment, 34.1% of Native Hawaiian students were proficient in reading compared to 48.5% of all students in the Department of Education (DOE) and 27.7% of Native Hawaiian students were proficient in Math compared to 40.9% of all students in the DOE (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2015a). While there have been improvements in enrollment of Native Hawaiian students in postsecondary institutions, only about 25% of Native Hawaiian young adults are enrolled in college compared to nearly 33% of young adults statewide and only 14% earn Bachelor's degrees or higher compared to the state average of 30% (Kamehameha Schools Strategic Planning and Implementation Division, 2014).

Education at Wai'anae High School

Hawai'i is the only state with one statewide school district, which was meant to ensure equitable resources across schools (Connect with us, n.d.). However, student achievement across

the state is not equitable. In 2009, five out of six of the lowest performing schools were located in areas identified as Zones for School Innovation. “Zones for School Innovation targeted support for struggling schools in rural or remote, hard-to-staff areas serving the largest population of Native Hawaiian and economically-disadvantaged students in the state” (Zones for School Innovation, para. 2). Waiʻanae High School was one of the schools identified as a priority school in a Zone of School Innovation.

The socioeconomic status of the community and rural location of Waiʻanae High contribute to student’s lower academic performance.

> In a 2003 Center on the Family community profile, Waiʻanae and Nānākuli ranked poorly on measures of child and family well-being, including unemployment, per-capita income, children in poverty, child abuse rates and school safety. Educational attainment falls below state and national averages (Zones for School Innovation, para. 6).

Students of poverty do not have basic needs met and may not be concerned with doing well in school. Kylene Beers (2005) says:

> Our children of poverty are most likely to attend schools that are best described as lacking: lacking equipment (of all sorts – lab equipment, band equipment, sports equipment, for example); lacking cleanliness; lacking textbooks; lacking computers and Internet access; lacking parental involvement; lacking extra-curricular activities; lacking fine arts and technology electives; lacking high student achievement; and lacking enough highly qualified teachers (p. 5).

Despite having a statewide system that divides financial resources equitably, schools in more affluent communities have access to more resources than those in disadvantaged communities (Cooke, 2001). Cooke (2001) states, “public schools in wealthier areas of the state still have

greater resources than those in poorer areas, even if the only greater resource is human capital in the form of more qualified teachers and role models in the community and home" (p. 8).

In the Nānākuli and Waiʻanae complex area, which includes eleven schools, "seven out of 10 students are disadvantaged, up to two-thirds are of Native Hawaiian descent, and many are homeless" (Zones for School Innovation, para. 5). The fall enrollment count at Waiʻanae High School during the 2015-2016 school year was 1803 and of those students 61% were Native Hawaiian (Accountability Section, Assessment and Accountability Branch, Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, 2015). Hawaiʻi Statewide Assessment (HSA) scores for the same school year showed students performed below the state average: 41% of 11th graders were proficient in Language Arts/Literacy compared to 56% in the state, 14% were proficient in Math compared to 30% in the state, and 16% were proficient in Science compared to 33% in the state (Accountability Section, Assessment and Accountability Branch, Office of Strategy, Innovation and Performance, 2015).

Indigenous Epistemology and Perceptions of Education

Much of the story presented up to this point favors the Western epistemology related to education and learning and highlights the deficits Native Hawaiians students face in a Western educational setting. "Understanding what native peoples believe about their knowledge origins, priorities, context, and exchange teaches us more about its continuity. Knowing something, then, is a cultural experience that strengthens of fractures culture" (Meyer, 1998, p. 22). In reference to the varying perspectives presented in stories told about Polynesian voyaging, Kanaʻiaupuni (2004) points out:

> This moʻolelo (story) is one example of a Western theory of an indigenous people based on foreign perceptions of reality. It reaffirms that knowledge is power – and that power

> lies in the use of knowledge to advance one understanding of the world as opposed to another (p. 26)…Although framing the problem as a deficit calls attention to the need for interventions, systemic reform, and redistribution of resources, it also works its way into a classist agenda that disfavors poor and/or indigenous populations (p. 29)

Carjuzaa and Ruff (2010) point out, "To achieve equity in education, deep-rooted cultural assumptions must be identified and acknowledged…To achieve equity, educators must question the standards being used to evaluate student understanding by considering multiple paradigms in addition to the dominant worldview" (p. 69).

"Non-Native people, too, need to recognize the coexistence of multiple worldviews and knowledge systems, and find ways to understand and relate to the world in its multiple dimensions and varied perspectives" (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005, p. 9). Educational policies, written by those in power from a western perspective, inadvertently discriminate against students who have ways of knowing and learning that are different from policy makers who assume that their policies are neutral and applicable to students from any culture. (De Plevitz, 2007). What often fails to be seen is "the importance and benefit of knowing about the histories and valued practices of cultural groups rather than trying to teach prescriptively according to broad, under examined generalities about groups" (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003, p. 20). Students want to feel that their ways of knowing and learning are valued and just as acceptable in school as those values held in western culture (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). Incorporating practices in schools that are similar to students' home cultures provides validation for students' ways of knowing. Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) say:

> Although deficit-model thinking is still with us, the cultural styles approach offered an alternative by characterizing cultural ways to different groups in terms that are respectful,

> attempting to describe them without making value judgments that suggest value hierarchies in cultural practices (p. 19).

Dei (2014) states, "Local cultural resource knowledge has not been prominent in the search for genuine educational options for youth. And, yet this can be an important tool for educational delivery" (p. 60). Indigenous ways of knowing and learning have not been tapped as a source of ideas for how to better engage students. "According to Indigenous Elders, educators and researchers, the central problem here is the fundamental historical disregard for Indigenous traditions, cultures and languages within mainstream (i.e. western) education systems" (Keddie, 2014, p. 56). An understanding of how Indigenous students view the world is crucial because it is so different from Western ways of knowing.

One significant difference that exists between Eurocentric and Indigenous worldviews is in beliefs about knowledge. The Western perspective is that knowledge is something individuals seek out and belongs to the individual who finds it (Wilson, 2001). Wilson (2001) states:

> An Indigenous paradigm comes from the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational. Knowledge is shared with all of creation…It is with the cosmos, it is with the animals, with the plants, with the earth we share this knowledge. It goes beyond the idea of individual knowledge to the concept of relational knowledge (pp. 176-177).

Indigenous epistemology is holistic with more emphasis placed on understanding how things fit within a bigger picture and understanding how pieces are connected to each other and the world (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). Further, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) state:

> There are some things that are not meant to be known or only meant to be known by particular people. Furthermore, with knowledge comes the burden of using it correctly and using it for the good of the group rather than for individual gain (p. 952).

Students who come from a background where learning is experiential and grounded in a more holistic view of the world find school to be "an impediment to learning to the extent that they focus on compartmentalized knowledge with little regard to how academic subjects relate to one another or to the surrounding universe" (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005, p. 11).

> The curricula, teaching methodologies, and assessment strategies associated with mainstream schooling are based on a worldview that does not adequately recognize or appreciate Indigenous notions of an interdependent universe and the importance of their place in their societies (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005, p. 10)

Most educational practices based on western ways of knowing assume that indigenous students who do not live in traditional ways are no longer connected to cultural ways of learning and knowing (De Plevitz, 2007). De Plevitz (2007) states, "This is not so…Indigenous people maintain a culture, not based on physical characteristics but on common beliefs, family ties, language and shared history" (p. 60). Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005) also state, "Many of the core values, beliefs, and practices associated with those worldviews have survived and are beginning to be recognized as being just as valid for today's generations as they were for generations past" (p. 9). While indigenous students who live in western culture must understand how to thrive in the western world, it should not be at the expense of their own cultures (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005).

Western education is compartmentalized with individual subjects taught in classroom settings that are detached from the context in which the skills and concepts are normally applied (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005) state:

> Indigenous people have traditionally acquired their knowledge through direct experience in the natural world. For them, the particulars come to be understood in relation to the

> whole, and the 'laws' are continually texted in the context of everyday survival…The relationship of each part to everything else must be understood to produce the whole image (p. 11-12).

Indigenous education is more holistic than its western counterpart with an emphasis on collective experience, and is "dependent on a free exchange of teaching and learning roles" (Macfarlane, Glynn, Grace, Penetito, & Bateman, 2008, p. 102). Indigenous education is grounded in the natural world. Students learn by observing of the world around them, making use of the resources available from plants and animals, and crafting tools using natural materials (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005).

Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005) state:

> Western thought also differs from indigenous thought in its notion of competency. In Western terms, competency is often assessed based on predetermined ideas of what a person should know, which is then measured indirectly through various forms of 'objective' tests. Such an approach does not address whether that person is actually capable of putting that knowledge into practice (p. 11).

Indigenous societies valued complex thinking and analytical skills, but these skills were exemplified in different ways than what would be expected in Western education (Macfarlane, Glynn, Grace, Penetito, & Bateman, 2008). "The knowledge, skills, and standards of attainment required to be a successful hunter were self-evident and what a young hunter needed to know and be able to do were both implicit and explicit in the father's lesson" (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005, p. 9). Macfarlane, et al. (2008) discussed the difficulties Maori students face as a result of not being "sufficiently engaged to access the social and academic skills to participate

successfully in contemporary schooling" (p. 112) because the expectations and competency measures are so different from indigenous expectations.

Another significant difference between Western and Indigenous epistemology is the emphasis on the individual versus the group. Western education focuses on the development of qualities in the individual that will contribute to participation in democratic society (Macfarlane, Glynn, Grace, Penetito, & Bateman, 2008). Indigenous education is concerned with how an individual can develop in order to contribute to the well-being of the group (Macfarlane, Glynn, Grace, Penetito, & Bateman, 2008). Macfarlane, et al. (2008) point out:

> A Māori worldview is characterized by an abiding concern for the quality of human relationships that need to be established and maintained if learning contexts are to be effective for Māori students, and for these relationships to balance individual learning and achievement against responsibilities for the well-being and achievement of the group (p. 102).

Keddie (2014) discusses the "epistemology of relationality" (p. 69) in her case study of Indigo House, an alternative school in Queensland, Australia:

> It is clear that schools cannot be a panacea for all social ills; however, they can make a significant difference toward enhancing the schooling participation and experience of Indigenous students…This epistemology where community, kinship, and family networks are at the centre of all relations was an ethos that differentiated the school from mainstream/non-Indigenous schools (p. 69).

Public schools in Hawai‘i are based on a western, mainstream model and Native Hawaiian students often must separate themselves from their culture in order to experience academic success. They have to "put aside cooperative and collaborative values of laulima (joint

action), kōkua (support), and haʻahaʻa (humility) and adopt values directed toward individual achievement and competition" (Kawakami, 1999, p. 18).

Native Hawaiian Cultural Ways of Knowing

Meyer (1998) states:

> Native Hawaiians have a rich heritage that overlooks a wider view of empirical realities. Learning is an active, oral, and experiential process based on gender, vocation, class, spiritual signs, political context, and environment. Timing, interest, need, and genealogy all play their role in the what, why, and how of Hawaiian curriculum and pedagogy. It was, and continues to be, a system with specific moral and spiritual priorities that are not found in today's classroom (p. 22).

Prior to western contact, Hawaiian society was based on a connection to stewardship of the natural environment and family connections (Kawakami, 1999). Hawaiians established a sophisticated society without the influence of outsiders and the need for a written language (Kawakami, 1999; Kanaʻiaupuni, 2004). Communication through oral language, songs, chants and dances ensured that knowledge would be passed on (Kawakami, 1999; Kana'iaupuni & Kawai'ae'a, 2008). Until the arrival of Captain Cook in 1778, education was "organized and implemented within the "'ohana" (Kawakami, 1999, p. 20) and learning happened as part of being a member of the community. "Master practitioners" (Kawakami, 1999, p. 20) taught successors by involving their students in the completion of "purposeful tasks to develop their knowledge" (Kawakami, 1999, p. 20).

Similar to other indigenous cultures, Hawaiian ways of knowing and learning are holistic (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Meyer, 1998). "Hawaiian historical and educational literature relative to epistemology can be viewed according to a number of themes or categories. These

categories, while related, share fluid boundaries because at any given moment, examples can describe any theme" (Meyer, 1998, p. 22). Themes identified by Meyer (1998) include:

- Spirituality and knowing – the cultural context of knowledge;
- Cultural nature of the senses – expanding notions of empiricism;
- Relationship and knowledge – the notion of self through other;
- Utility and knowledge – the ideas of wealth and usefulness;
- Words and knowledge – the idea of causality in language; and,
- The body/mind question – alternatives to the illusion of separation (p. 22).

Spirituality in the Hawaiian sense does not refer specifically to religion, but rather connectedness and interrelatedness between people and the world around them. Meyer (1998) states:

> Knowledge and spirituality are interwoven into almost *every* description of how Hawaiians view intellect, skill acquisition, wisdom, learning, knowledge, and understanding…Hawaiians value and solicit understanding of their world from their ancestors, both alive and dead…Learning is a constant exchange among the environment, the gods, and the people (pp. 22-23).

Hawaiians believe that all things have spirit and empiricism is at the core of how knowledge is formed (Meyer, 1998). "How one experiences the environment plays a huge role in how the world is understood and defined, and this experience is nursed and fed via cultural practices, beliefs, and values" (Meyer, 1998, p. 23).

Interconnectedness also impacts the nature of relationships from the Hawaiian perspective. "The Hawaiian worldview stresses relationships first. It is spiritual, giving, and intimately bound to the land and genealogy. This worldview is a source of resilience and strength" (Kana'iaupuni, 2004, p. 30). Relationships go deeper than simply interpersonal or

social connections. “The subjective relationships that dominate the Polynesian psyche are with all nature, in its totality, and all the parts separately apprehended and sensed as personal” (Handy & Pukui, 1972, p. 118). These connections to the world and others guide Hawaiians in making sense of the world and impacts learning (Meyer, 1998).

“Usefulness/utility help shape what is considered worth knowing and how this knowledge is maintained” (Meyer, 1998, p. 24). From the Hawaiian epistemology ideas, people, and things are meaningful because they serve a purpose. Hawaiians had an oral culture and knowledge was passed on verbally, so significance was a requirement for remembering information (Meyer, 1998). “It is a world that requires significance to be remembered, and significance is tied to the many faces of usefulness” (Meyer, 1998, p. 24). Because Hawaiian was an oral culture, words were significant and understanding how they were used is an important aspect of Hawaiian epistemology. Words were thought to carry *mana* (power) and choosing the correct words was important for inciting the right actions or thinking (Meyer, 1998)

The final concept described by Meyer (1998) is *na‘au*, “it exemplifies a Hawaiian understanding of mind and emotion and offers clarity on what is valuable with regard to intellect and wisdom” (p. 26). The term *na‘auao* literally means “daylight mind” is used to describe “knowledge, wisdom, and intelligence” (Meyer, 1998, p. 26). The *na‘au* refers to the guts or stomach region and its place in the word *na‘auao* indicates the connections between mind and body. Meyer (1998) further states:

> Thinking and feeling are not separate. This idea returns to the cultural nature of the senses because of the basic sensory tenet that Hawaiians “felt” wisdom and “experienced” intellect. Intelligence is not void of sense or feeling…Hawaiian intelligence is fused with all aspects of Hawaiian culture: with spirituality, with ideas of

utility, with relationships, with a rich source of values, within an historical context, and with a sense of environmental rapport (p. 26).

Instructional Practices and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) developed through her research the "theoretical underpinnings of culturally relevant pedagogy" (p. 477). The framework that emerged includes three concepts that help to define culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). The first concept is a teacher's conception of self and others. Ladson-Billings (1995) states:

In brief, the teachers:

- believed that all students were capable of academic success;
- saw their pedagogy as art – unpredictable, always in the process of becoming;
- saw themselves as members of the community;
- saw teaching as a way to give back to the community; and,
- believed in a Freirean notion of "teaching as mining" (1974, p. 76) or pulling knowledge out" (p. 478).

Studies about indigenous students often focus on the achievement gap that exists between indigenous and other students (Kana'iaupuni, 2004). Shifting the focus from deficits to using strengths to overcome challenges helps students to see the potential for growth. "Teachers talked about their own shortcomings and limitations and ways they needed to change to ensure student success" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 479).

"Children bring with them to school culturally-based ways of doing, seeing, and knowing; in response, culturally relevant teachers find ways to scaffold those cultural experiences in order for the students to gain additional meaning and ultimately be successful" (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 77). Culturally relevant teaching requires teachers to see

themselves as members of the community. When teachers immerse themselves in the community, it allows for a deeper understanding of the types of experiences faced by students. "Teaching the whole child will require not only that teachers recognize, understand, and intentionally acknowledge cultural group behaviors, but also observe and interact with students as individuals" (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 77). Beyond helping teachers understand how to best support students, students also recognize when teachers are investing time into knowing them better and students are motivated to engage with those teachers (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

The second concept Ladson-Billings describes is the nature of social relationships (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Briefly, the teachers:

- maintained fluid student-teacher relationships;
- demonstrated a connectedness with all of the students;
- developed a community of learners; and,
- encouraged students to learn collaboratively and be responsible for one another.

(Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 480)

While in mainstream culture, positive reinforcement works to foster stronger relationships, indigenous cultures value group well-being so pointing out individual student accomplishments may actually work against building strong relationships (Au, 2009). Understanding these differences and the nature of positive relationships in indigenous cultures is necessary in order to begin to develop a supportive classroom environment that encourages learning and collaboration. "Education is both an individual and a collective experience, where engagement and success can

be enhanced and enriched via strengths-based approaches which integrate the culture and community of learners" (Kana'iaupuni, Ledward, & Jensen, 2010, p. 2).

McNulty and Quaglia (2007) stated, "Schools across the country are realizing that rigor and relevance develop most naturally when they are cultivated on firm grounding in relationships" (para. 21). Positive relationships that are "deliberately nurtured" allow for increased student success because students are willing to rise to higher expectations when "students believe the staff genuinely cares about them" (McNulty & Quaglia, 2007, para. 24). "Many students of color grow up in cultural environments where the welfare of the group takes precedence over the individual and where individuals are taught to pool their resources to solve problems" (Gay, 2002, p. 110). In mainstream culture, personal achievement of an individual is valued and success is measured by how well an individual is able to meet outcomes. In diverse groups, such as in Hawai'i, the success of the group is more important than individual achievement and cooperation and working with others is valued (Au, 2009).

The conception of knowledge is the third concept discussed in Ladson-Billings theory of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

In summary, their conceptions or beliefs about knowledge include:

- knowledge is not static, it is shared, recycled, and constructed;
- knowledge must be viewed critically;
- teachers must be passionate about knowledge and learning;
- teachers must scaffold, or build bridges, to facilitate learning; and,
- assessment must be multifaceted, incorporating multiple forms of excellence. (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 481)

"The rigid performance measurement system established under NCLB [No Child Left Behind] holds all schools accountable to the same standard and accepts no justifications for failure to meet that standard" (Kanaʻiaupuni, 2008, p. 35). Ladson-Billings (1995), in her discussion of culturally relevant pedagogy, offers a counter perspective to this standardized view of knowledge. Kanaʻiaupuni (2004) asks, "Yet how do we recognize when knowledge is being used against us? How do we know when we are part of its misuse?" (p. 34).

"Study after study documents the disparities in achievement between indigenous and other students" (Kanaʻiaupuni, 2004, p. 28). Indigenous students often fail to meet expectations for knowledge acquisition because the definition of knowledge is based on mainstream values. "Deficits-based approaches often miss the expertise that exists in our communities" (Kanaʻiaupuni, Ledward, & Jensen, 2010, p. 35; Kanaʻiaupuni & Ishibashi, 2003) because indigenous knowledge does not hold the same value in education as the knowledge outlined by standards like CCSS. As the gap between school and home widens, students become disengaged.

"While teachers must practice in the context of this standardized curriculum, they can also embrace the opportunity to incorporate or cultivate additional views of achievement that will allow those who do not experience achievement through the standard curriculum to obtain success through these additional methods" (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 76). Students come with their own knowledge and teachers should act as the bridge between home and school to help students to make meaning of academic knowledge. In their discussion of cognitive theory, Demmert and Towner (2003) suggest that students are better able to learn when "prior knowledge is activated" (p. 2) and connections are made between new information and existing knowledge.

Culture Based Education

Demmert's (2011) description of culture-based education (CBE) includes a discussion of "principles of effective teaching" (p. 3) that echo concepts previously identified in Ladson-Billing's (1995) theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. These principles include: "teachers and students working together", "connecting lessons to students lives", and "engaging students with challenging lessons" (p. 3-4). At the core of CBE is the notion that culture, language, and community are fundamental to learning. A child's earliest learning experiences happen during interactions with families and community who share culture and language. In reference to culture Bruner (1996) states, "Learning and thinking are always situated in a cultural setting and always dependent on the utilization of cultural resources" (p. 4). Bruner (1996) points out that culture shapes our views of the world and we cannot understand learning without understanding culture. Kana'iaupuni, Ledward, and Jensen (2010) also assert, "evidence demonstrates the benefits of creating an educational environment that is relevant to and reflective of student realities, background, and culture" (p. 3). Developing a strong cultural identity can "mitigate negative experiences" and "contributes to innovation and creativity" (Kana'iaupuni, Ledward, & Jensen, 2010, p. 3).

In order to define CBE and understand the practices aligned to it, one must have a "basic understanding of what it includes" (Demmert, 2011, p. 1). While these principles apply across cultural groups, Demmert (2011) asserts that it is important to first recognize that "CBE programs will not all be the same and may vary for different Indigenous student groups schools serve" (p. 1). Another important facet of CBE is assessment. According to Demmert (2011), CBE programs must develop assessment tools that will "accurately measure the levels of a

school's CBE program," that are "linguistically as well as culturally appropriate," and that reflect the priorities of the community while meeting needs of students (p. 1).

A consortium of educators was brought together to develop a rubric to define characteristics of CBE programs that could be applied across cultures and programs (Demmert, What is culture based education? Understanding pedagogy and curriculum., 2011). The indicators included in the rubric are:

1. Culturally-based Indigenous Language Use;
2. Culturally-based Pedagogy;
3. Culturally-based Curriculum;
4. Culturally-based Patterns of Participation in Leadership and Decision-Making; and,
5. Culturally-based Methods of Assessing Student Performance (Demmert, 2011, p. 3).

These indicators are reflected in the definition of culture-based education discussed by Kanaʻiaupuni and Kawaiʻaeʻa (2008). Kanaʻiaupuni and Kawaiʻaeʻa (2008) present culture-based education as "the grounding of instruction and student learning in values, norms, knowledge, beliefs, practices, experiences, places, and language that are a foundation of culture, in this case Hawaiian indigenous culture" (p. 71). Five components of culture-based education were identified and used to develop the Hawaiian Indigenous Education Rubric (HIER). The five components are: language, ʻohana and community involvement, culture and place-based content, context, and assessment and accountability.

Kanaʻiaupuni, Ledward, and Jensen (2010) present findings of their study "indicating that culture-based educational strategies positively impact student outcomes, particularly Native

Hawaiian student outcomes" (p. 2). Even when enrolled at public schools where culture is not the main focus, students are more engaged when learning experiences are culture-based (Kana'iaupuni, Ledward, & Jensen, 2010; Yamauchi, 2003; Demmert, 2011). "The data support the hypothesis that cultural approaches strongly enhance relevance and relationships at school, while also supporting positive academic outcomes" (Kana'iaupuni, Ledward, & Jensen, 2010, p. 17).

Summary

My review of existing literature helped me better understand the context of education in Hawai'i. Existing research indicates that a western educational system has not adequately addressed the needs of indigenous students (De Plevitz, 2007; Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003; Kana'iaupuni & Kawai'ae'a, 2008; Kawakami, 1999). Gaps in academic achievement are often the focus of narratives about Native Hawaiians (Kana'iaupuni, 2004). While some programs and teachers have found success in better preparing children, these efforts have not become the norm.

Differences between indigenous and western ways of knowing should be honored when designing learning experiences. Native knowledge systems are holistic and connections between both people and ideas are important (Demmert, 2011). Native education was not separated from daily life and happened in a reciprocal process where the flow of information between student and teacher was fluid (Meyer, 1998). Moreover, utility and intuition had an impact on what was lessons were deemed valuable.

Literature on culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) offered strategies for better attending to the needs of students. In congruence with literature on indigenous epistemologies, the research on CRP highlighted the importance of relationships and connections between students (Ladson-

Billings, 1995). Linking the classroom to familiar experiences helps learners make sense of new information and understand the relevance of learning (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

The research on culture-based education supported both the literature about culturally relevant pedagogy and indigenous ways of knowing. Positive relationships between teachers and students are foundational and lessons are grounded in culture and language of the community. A strong cultural identity provides a foundation for students to build on and grow from (Kanaʻiaupuni, Ledward, & Jensen, 2010).

The literature presented in this chapter provided the underpinning for my study. A significant amount of research has been conducted on culturally relevant pedagogy and indigenous education, but there are few studies that address the unique context of education on the Waiʻanae coast. Given the statistics about Native Hawaiians in my community, I think it is critical to better understand how to meet the needs of students in order to change the outcomes.

The literature (Au, 2009; Au & Maaka, 1998; Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Demmert, 2011; Kanaʻiaupuni, Ledward, & Jensen, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995) clearly explains the need for different approaches to education for indigenous students. A few studies have been conducted on specific programs situated on the leeward coast of Oʻahu; however, student voices are not included in existing studies (Ceppi, 2000; Yamauchi, 2003; Au & Maaka, 1998). The alumni perspective may provide insight that is not available from other sources. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by offering the student perspective. In addition, it will offer information that is important to addressing the unique needs of the Waiʻanae community that have not been previously studied.

Chapter 3: Methodology

*"*Qualitative methods are often used in evaluations because they tell the program's story by capturing and communicating the participants' stories*."* (Patton, 2002, p. 10). The purpose of this study was to gather participants' stories and explore strategies that supported students. A qualitative approach allows participants to provide insight that is not measured easily via other methods. Patton (2002) states, "Doctors who look only at test results and don't also listen to their patients are making judgments with inadequate knowledge, and vice versa" (p. 14). The Hawai'i Department of Education administers Tripod Surveys yearly to gather data about student perceptions of teacher effectiveness, but the depth of the information is not significant (Tripod student survey FAQs, 2016). "Given the qualitative emphasis on striving for depth of understanding, in context, attitude surveys and psychological tests are inadequate for revealing inner perspectives" (Patton, 2002, p. 48). This study is meant to give voice to alumni in an effort to improve the experience for future students.

Qualitative Narrative Ethnographic Action Research

The study was made up of interviews of alumni that represent different types of students. "Qualitative data describe…. They capture and communicate someone else's experience of the world in his or her own words. Qualitative data tell a story" (Patton, 2002, p. 46). The goal was to capture the student perspective about how to better support the needs of students. Exploring themes that emerge through "inductive analysis" that "begins with specific observations and builds toward general patterns" help to better understand student experiences (Patton, 2002, p. 56).

> The strategy of inductive designs is to allow the important analysis dimensions to emerge from patterns found in the cases under study without presupposing in advance what the

> dimensions will be. The qualitative analyst seeks to understand the multiple interrelationships among dimensions that emerge from the data without making prior assumptions or specifying hypotheses about the linear or correlative relationships among narrowly defined operationalized variables. (Patton, 2002, p. 56).

Teaching and learning is complex and multi-dimensional with many factors that influence student success. In order to provide support to students, it is necessary to understand how all these factors are connected and which ones students feel have the most impact on their growth and success. The complexity of the relationships between all the factors that impact teaching and learning make a qualitative approach most appropriate for analyzing how to better meet the needs of students.

A narrative ethnographic action research approach was employed to answer the research questions. The foundational question in an ethnographic study is, "What is the culture of this group of people?" (Patton, 2002, p. 81). Native Hawaiian students at Wai'anae High School have a unique culture and understanding the culture of these participants is an important part of understanding how to support these students. Glesne (2011) describes ethnographic research as research that "develops the 'thick description' (Geertz 1973) needed for getting at how people within a cultural group construct and share meaning" (p. 17). This "thick description" is needed to capture student voices and provide adequate information to find appropriate themes from the data.

Narrative analysis is the primary approach for capturing participants' perspectives. The foundational question of a narrative analysis is: "What does this narrative or story reveal about the person and world from which it came? How can this narrative be interpreted so that it provides an understanding of and illuminates the life and culture that created it?" (Patton, 2002,

p. 115). Illuminating student voice was an important goal of this study because it is a perspective that is key to informing future improvement efforts.

An action research approach is aimed at solving problems within an organization and engages people within the organization to study problems that exist in order to facilitate change (Patton, 2002; Glesne, 2011). The research question in this study was: How can teachers better meet the needs of students at Wai‘anae High School? The goal of answering this research question is to improve students' experience and increase student success. The primary intent of the study is to inform instructional practices and find ways to solve problems associated with student learning.

Participants

Purposive sampling, both heterogeneity and homogenous approaches, are employed in this study (Patton, 2002). "The purpose of purposive sampling is to select information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study" (Patton, 2002, p. 46). Merriam (2009) states, "Selecting respondents on the basis of what they can contribute to the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon under study means engaging in purposive or theoretical sampling" (p. 105). The participants were alumni who have graduated within the last five years. Participants selected represented each of the pathways within the school (Arts and Communication, Business, Health and Human Services, Industrial Engineering and Technology, Natural Resources and Public and Human Services). Because students in each pathway may have very different experiences, it was important to hear the stories from alumni in all pathways. Patton (2002) suggests two types of outcomes from the data of small, diverse samples: "detailed descriptions of each case, which are useful for documenting uniqueness" and "important shared patterns that cut across cases and derive their significance from having emerged out of

heterogeneity" (p. 235).

In addition to selecting diverse participants based on pathway, participants were selected to have diverse representation based on grade-point average and participation in specialized programs. Patton (2002) states, "A program that has many different kinds of participants may need in-depth information about a particular subgroup" (Patton, 2002, p. 235). This grouping also allowed for further exploration of similar experiences of these sub-groups. "One may learn a great deal more by focusing in depth on understanding the needs, interests, and incentives of a small number of carefully selected poor families than by gathering standardized information from a large, statistically significant sample" (Patton, 2002, p. 46).

Data Collection

"A qualitative design needs to remain sufficiently open and flexible to permit exploration of whatever the phenomenon under study offers for inquiry. Qualitative designs continue to be emergent even after data collection begins" (Patton, 2002, p. 255). Data was collected through semi-structured interviews of individual participants. "Hawaiian knowledge relied on oral traditions" (Kana'iaupuni, 2004, p. 26). Thus, one of the primary reasons for selecting interviews is oral communication is preferred over written communication based on my past experience with potential participants. As a classroom teacher, I found students could express themselves, their understanding, or opinions when I had conversations with them even if they were not able to express those same thoughts in writing. I often had to follow up on written assessments with a conversation to confirm what students truly understood because sometimes they were not able to convey their understanding in writing. By conducting interviews, my goal was to capture the depth of participants' ideas that may not be clearly expressed via questionnaires or other methods of data collection.

"The Hawaiian worldview stresses relationships first" (Kana'iaupuni, 2004, p. 30). I began each interview by asking participants a little about themselves and then telling them about myself. I had five interview questions that were asked of each participant but the semi-structured approach allowed for further exploration based on the responses of participants. Each participant was asked to respond to the same set of questions, but additional questions were posed based on participant responses to allow for further clarification and deeper understanding of participant experiences. An interview guide ensured that the interview stayed focused on the topic and made the most effective use of time. Patton says, "A guide is essential in conducting focus group interviews for it keeps the interactions focused while allowing individual perspectives and experiences to emerge" (Patton, 2002, pp. 343-344).

For the purpose of this study, the interview questions were broad to capture the participants' ideas about the meaning of support and growth. Support and student growth were not defined for participants. In some cases, support included both classroom support as well as support in other areas, such as with personal issues. In other cases, participants focused much more on what teachers offered to support students during class. Participants also described growth differently, but most talked about growth in terms of learning new things and being prepared for future endeavors. During interviews, I found most participants had difficulty with describing specific activities without connecting them to a person or a more holistic experience. The questions asked of participants to elicit responses that would help me answer my research questions were:

- What kinds of learning activities or experiences do you feel helped you the most?
- How did teachers make learning interesting and engaging for you?

- How would you describe a good teacher? What are qualities/characteristics of "good" teachers?
- How would you describe a "bad" teacher? What are qualities/characteristics of "bad" teachers?
- What advice would you give a teacher new to Waiʻanae High School about how to best support his/her students?

I found that most participants were better able to describe good teachers when they were also asked to describe "bad" teachers. Participants were better able to provide details and specific examples when describing the contrast between "good" and "bad" experiences.

The sequence of questions in each interview remained constant. Patton (2002) suggests that you "begin an interview with questions about noncontroversial present behaviors, activities, and experiences like 'What are you currently working on in school?'…They encourage the respondent to talk *descriptively*" (p. 352). I started by asking each participant what he or she had been doing since graduating from high school as both a means to establish rapport and encourage descriptive responses. Patton (2002) also states, "once some experience or activity has been described, then opinions and feelings can be solicited" (p. 352). In each interview, I asked participants to first describe experiences and then explain further using how or why questions to capture participants' feelings about those experiences.

Prior to interviews, each participant was provided with a Consent to Participate form that was approved by the University of Hawaiʻi Human Studies Program. The form provided participants with a brief description of the study and research questions, details about data collection activities in the study, the time commitment, and assurance of confidentiality. Participants were also asked to provide consent to audio recording of the interviews. Participants

were assured that participation was voluntary and given a copy of the form.

I scheduled interviews via email and phone contact. This allowed for flexibility and ease of communication. Scheduling interviews that were convenient for participants required the coordination of schedules and it was necessary to communicate in a timely manner. Email and phone contact made it possible to follow up with participants with updates to scheduled interviews and locations. Participants were asked to provide possible days and times that were convenient for them to meet when they were initially contacted about participation. Based on the provided days and times, interviews were scheduled and participants were invited to participate if their schedules allowed.

Interviews were conducted at locations convenient for the participants, most within the Wai‘anae community. Many participants still live in the vicinity. Creswell (2007) explains, “care must be taken to create an environment as comfortable as possible and, in group settings, to encourage all participants to talk” (p. 164). Allowing participants to select a location may have helped them “feel more empowered in their interaction with the researcher” (Elwood & Martin, 2000, p. 656). In choosing a site, I wanted to ensure that the locations suggested by participants would be quiet and free of distractions (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002).

Data Analysis

> Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. No formula exists for that transformation. Guidance, yes. But no recipe. Direction can and will be offered, but the final destination remains unique for each inquirer, known only when – and if – arrived at (Patton, 2002, p. 432).

After each interview, I transcribed the recording of the interview. Although time consuming, transcribing each interview myself in between interviews allowed me to analyze my

interviewing techniques and make adjustments for subsequent interviews. As a novice researcher, this helped me to refine my process and improve my questioning technique. "Doing all or some of your own interview transcriptions (instead of having them done by a transcriber), for example, provides an opportunity to get immersed in the data, an experience that usually generates emergent insights" (Patton, 2002, p. 441).

I began analyzing the data as I was conducting interviews and began to see themes emerging even before beginning a formal coding process. Patton (2002) states, "…the fluid and emergent nature of naturalistic inquiry makes the distinction between data gathering and analysis far less absolute…Recording and tracking analytical insights that occur during data collection are part of fieldwork *and* the beginning of qualitative analysis" (p. 436). After each interview, I collected my own thoughts in a research journal so that I could refer back and reflect on my initial thoughts about the data I was collecting.

Once the data collection process and transcriptions were complete, I began to scan the transcripts for patterns in the participants' responses. *"Inductive analysis* involves *discovering* patterns, themes, and categories in one's data. Findings emerge out of the data, through the analysis interaction with the data, in contrast to *deductive analysis* where the data are analyzed according to an existing framework" (Patton, 2002, p. 453). Initially the process of analyzing transcripts was inductive and I was looking to the data for themes. As I went through more transcripts, I began to work from a "deductive stance" (p. 183) because I was looking for evidence to support the themes I previously identified (Merriam, 2009). After identifying themes that emerged from the data in each transcript, I was able to go back through the interview transcripts and confirm these themes existed and identify instances where a theme may not apply. Patton (2002) states,

> Once patterns, themes, and/or categories have been established through inductive analysis, the final, confirmatory stage of qualitative analysis may be deductive in testing and affirming the authenticity and appropriateness of the inductive content analysis, including carefully examining deductive cases or data that don't fit the categories developed (p. 454).

Triangulation

Triangulation calls for gathering information from a variety of sources and using a variety of methods (Fielding & Fielding, 1986). Maxwell (2013) explains:

> This strategy reduces the risk that your conclusions will reflect only the systematic biases or limitations of a specific source or method, and allows you to gain a broader and more secure understanding of the issues you are investigating (pp. 93-94).

While data was collected primarily through interviews, data was collected from a variety of participants "with different perspectives or from follow-up interviews with the same people" (Merriam, 2009, p. 216). Participants were grouped into both pathway and academic achievement groups. I analyzed data within each group to identify themes and then looked at what themes were shared between groups. I was able to triangulate by using multiple sources of data across these groupings. Participants were provided transcripts to provide member-checks and confirm that the transcripts were accurate representations of participants' responses.

Once my preliminary data analysis was completed, I conducted a focus group to review my interpretation of the data. This provided another opportunity to validate my analysis and triangulate. I initially invited eight participants to attend the focus group so I would have representation from each pathway and academic achievement group. Because of scheduling conflicts, only two of the eight invited were available to meet. I then invited three others with

more flexible schedules who still live in the area, hoping to have at least five participants in order to capture varying perspectives. In the end, only one of those three additional invitees could attend. As such, the focus group consisted of three of the original participants.

Limitations

One limitation of the study was my role as the researcher. As the data collecting instrument, both my limited research experience and biases impacted the study. As a novice researcher, I prepared an interview guide and practiced my questioning technique to be as systematic and objective as possible and not interject my thoughts during an interview. While subjectivity cannot be completely eliminated, I tried to minimize the impact on my research. I created specific criteria for participants to ensure that I was able to gather data from diverse perspectives. I have been a teacher and leader in my research setting for over fifteen years and I have my own opinions about how to better support students. Throughout the data collection and analysis process, I worked to remain aware of my own beliefs through "conscious and committed reflexivity – entering the *hermeneutical circle of interpretation* and therein reflecting on and analyzing how their perspective interacts with the perspectives they encounter" (Patton, 2002, p. 570). I verified the data via member checks and established validity using triangulation methods.

My impact on participants may also be seen as a limitation to the study. Maxwell (2013) says, "The influence of the researcher on the setting or individuals studied, generally known as 'reactivity,' is a second problem that is often raised about qualitative studies" (p. 108). My role as a teacher at Wai'anae High School may have had an impact on how much participants were willing to share. I spent time at the beginning of each interview assuring participants that my research was not part of my work and that anything shared would be kept completely confidential. The beginning of each interview was spent in more light conversation not related to

my interview questions to help participants feel comfortable with me and willing to share honestly. I also tried to be conscious of my facial reactions, minimize any verbal feedback either positive or negative, and maintain a neutral posture throughout the interview to minimize my influence on the participants.

The specificity of my participant selection process and the setting of my study could also be viewed as limitations. My research is focused on a specific setting and target population so the results may not be generalizable for a broader setting.

Summary

This is a qualitative study designed to capture participants' ideas about their experiences. The methods I selected to conduct this study allowed for both flexibility and structure so I was able to gather data that was necessary to answer my research questions. Employing a narrative approach gave me the opportunity to explore participants' stories and gain a deeper understanding about how to address educational needs from a student perspective. The following chapter presents an analysis of the data.

Chapter 4: Findings

Aloha e ka pali e Waiʻanae
Love to the cliffs of Waiʻanae

I nā lima hanapaʻa i ke ʻala hoʻoheno
In the hands that work remain the fragrance of infatuation

Ke ʻala o ka maile hihi ke kukui
The scent of the maile entangled in the kukui trees

Ka lei o ka lei kau i ka umauma
The lei that adorns a broad man's chest
(Ngum, 1992)

This verse speaks of the lasting impression left by Waiʻanae and the scent of its lush flora. In this chapter, I will share the voices that resonated with me and weave them together like a lei (garland) to tell the story of my participants.

Creswell (2007) describes qualitative research as an inquiry process during which researchers interpret what they see and hear. "*Qualitative research* begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2007, p. 37). Within a social constructivist framework, meaning is derived from the desire to understand the world and meaning emerges from social interactions. The purpose of this study was to better understand student experiences and explore the following research questions:

- How can teachers better support the needs of Native Hawaiian students at Waiʻanae High School?
- What learning experiences at Waiʻanae High School were most effective in contributing to student growth?

I have been seeking the answers to these questions throughout my tenure at Waiʻanae High School and my goal in this study was to illuminate the student voice and offer a perspective that

is often absent from discussions about how to improve teaching and learning. I sought to describe the "lived experiences" of students based on the commonalities that surfaced in the stories of alumni (Creswell, 2007, p. 57).

The participants of the study were alumni who attended Waiʻanae High School from 2011 through 2016. Participants shared their stories about learning experiences and the impact, whether positive or negative, of those experiences. Three participants met as a focus group following the interviews to validate themes that emerged during the individual interviews and provided further insight about the types of support teachers can provide to students.

At Waiʻanae High School, students select a career and technical education pathway based on an interest. Pathway selection affects the series of elective courses taken throughout a student's sophomore through senior year. The six pathways are: Arts and Communication (AC), Business (B), Health Services (HS), Industrial Engineering and Technology (IET), Natural Resources (NR), and Public and Human Services (PHS). Participants were selected to represent each pathway. Participants were also grouped into four different levels of academic proficiency. The four groups are:

- Group 1 – participants that participated in an AP or honors course, or maintained a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 or higher
- Group 2 – participants that maintained a GPA of 2.5 – 3.5
- Group 3 – participants that had a GPA of less than 2.5
- Group 4 – participants that received additional services in either a resource, inclusion, or English language learner (ELL) setting.

Participants are named for the academic group and also the acronym for the pathway to which they belong.

Table 1. Participant Grouping

Group and Criteria	Participant(s) Description
Group 1 – AP/Honors • **Participated in an AP or advanced core course** • **Cumulative GPA above 3.5**	1B – female, business 1AC – female, arts and communication 1IET – male, industrial engineering and technology 1PHS – female, public and human services 1HS – female, health services 1NR – male, natural resources
Group 2 – High-End Average • **Cumulative GPA from 2.5-3.5**	2IET – female, industrial engineering and technology 2NR – female, natural resources 2AC – male, arts and communication 2NR.1 – male, natural resources 2PHS – male, public and human services 2B – male, business 2HS – female, health services
Group 3 – Low-End Average • **Cumulative GPA below 2.5**	3B – male, business 3NR – male, natural resources 3PHS – female, public and human services 3AC – female, arts and communication 3HS – male, health services 3IET – male, industrial engineering and technology 3AC.1 – female, arts and communication
Group 4 – Additional Needs • **Participated in a resource, inclusion, or ELL class/program**	4NR – female, natural resources 4AC – female, arts and communication 4B – female, business 4PHS – male, public and human services 4IET – female, industrial engineering and technology 4HS – female, health services

Several themes emerged from the data and the sections in this chapter will present an analysis of both themes that appeared in specific participant groups and those that were common amongst all participants. I used an inductive process (Thomas, 2006) for data analysis and began by identifying key characteristics participants discussed when describing teachers and experiences that supported their learning. Initially, I identified 22 different characteristics within the data. Those characteristics were organized into seven broader categories. Those categories were then grouped to become sub-themes of three broader, high-level themes.

In part I, the focus will be themes that emerged within pathway groups. Part II will present themes that arose in academic achievement groups. In Part III, a discussion of themes that were validated by the focus group will be presented. Part IV will present a cross-case analysis, focusing on those themes and sub-themes that represent commonalities amongst participants despite differences in pathway and academic achievement. They are discussed in order of how often the theme appeared in the data. Finally, in Part V, data I felt were significant despite not surfacing in several interviews will be examined.

Part I – Pathway Group Findings

Arts and Communication (AC) Pathway. In the AC pathway, perhaps more than in any of the other pathways, project-based learning is an integral part of the academic program (Allen, 2017). Students learn skills, such as video production and graphic design, which will eventually be applied to projects for real clients. Students have opportunities to participate in regional and national competitions where they can apply what they learn in classes and create authentic products. These types of opportunities require a significant amount of time and dedication beyond what is necessary to complete normal class projects. Five of the participants were in the AC pathway.

Clear expectations with modeling. Teacher modeling skills and behavior was important for students in this pathway. Participants expressed that the learned best when they could see the expected outcomes. They felt they grew more when teachers helped them develop skills to achieve the goals rather than gave them the answers. Participants also shared that it was better when teachers gave the opportunity to see the expected outcomes and then students could figure out the best way to achieve those goals. Participant 4AC spoke to the importance of knowing

what was expected. She talked about how her digital media teachers provided clear expectations and showed the class how to perform each task. She shared:

> For me, it was how they presented the projects…there were steps involved and I enjoy taking steps in things. It wasn't like "here is a project, okay bye have fun" and you're like "where do I start." With them [digital media teachers], they told you where to start and what the angle was and I enjoyed that.

Participant 2AC also talked about his digital media teachers, and others, who provided clear goals. This was important for him because he did not feel he learned in the same way as everyone else and seeing the expected outcomes allowed him to understand what he needed to learn. He further explained that if teachers gave him the freedom to work toward the goal in his own way, he was more motivated to learn. He said:

> I love the teachers that allowed me to exercise creative freedom so much so that a lot of the work I did for those teachers was done outside of school. I was so motivated by what I did because I felt like what I was doing was my own and it wasn't like I could peek over [cheat] on this one. It's just up to me to figure it out and get it done.

Relationships and collaboration. Relationships with teachers as well as between students were an important component of learning for participants in this pathway. When asked what advice they would give new teachers, or teachers new to Wai'anae, all participants said that develop relationships was the most important thing to do in a classroom. Participant 3AC spoke about how she felt teachers could engage students in learning. She said:

> I know it is the student's job to make sure they are learning. But it is also up to the teacher to do things to make sure the students are engaged, which is ultimately to develop

> relationships. They have to understand the students to know how to get them interested in learning.

Participant 4AC shared her advice for new teachers. He stated, "I feel like it is really important for students to see you [teacher] as a person that wants the best for them [students]."

In addition to developing relationships, participants also discussed fostering collaboration between students as a quality of "good" teaching. All those in this pathway preferred group projects to individual work. They also spoke about how collaborating with others helped to bring out the best in each individual. Participant 1AC spoke about working in a group on her designer toy project. She shared, "Just working together, it brought out the best in each member…people got to see each other do their best work, so that really helped to motivate us." Participant 4AC also spoke of projects in her arts and communication classes. She explained that near the end of each project, each student would show the class his or her work and the class would provide feedback. She shared that the collaborative critique process helped her improve and grow. She said:

> Everyone would critique it on the big screen. They would tell us what we should fix, what was good about it, what we should continue with. It was basically us helping each other do better in class and us knowing our work was getting better and better.

Student passion. All participants in this pathway reported that student passion for the subject had an impact on their learning. When asked what learning experiences helped her grow the most, Participant 1AC responded:

> I would say definitely being in Searider Digital [a program within the AC pathway]. It really helped with my communication and presenting skills, and even how to work with different groups. I found my passion here, too, which was designing.

After graduating, she stayed on as an intern with the program and has continued her education as a design major in college. Participant 4AC also spoke about how passion she developed for psychology after taking a class in high school encouraged her to continue learning. Her newfound passion kept her motivated in class, despite the challenges, and she is currently pursuing a major in psychology in college.

Hands-on learning, real-world application. Hands-on, authentic application of skills is an important component of project-based learning (citation). All participants, when asked to describe the characteristics of good teachers, discussed teachers who helped them make real-world connections to content and provided hands-on experiences where students could demonstrate skills. Participant 3AC described a math teacher who, as part of the daily routine, talked about current events related to the content. She also shared that students were asked to demonstrate skills by solving real-world problems, presented either through word problems or simulations.

Participant 2AC remembered a story his physics teacher shared about making bottle rockets with his son. The teacher helped this participant understand the lesson better because he was able to show how the concepts were applied through the story. Participant 2AC also spoke of his digital media teachers who encouraged students to seek the skills on their own so they could be applied to projects. For example, he was asked to create a digital iPad magazine and needed to learn how to use the software and develop a layout to complete the task. Rather than teaching him how to use the software, his teachers acted as facilitators to help him find resources that he used to learn the software on his own.

Routine and structure. Three out of the five participants from the AC pathway talked about specific routines, or structures, which helped when they were faced with challenging tasks

and concepts. Participant 1AC considered writing to be difficult and remembered a structure she was taught that she still uses for assignments. She explained:

> Whenever I have to write an essay I think about how my Spanish teacher made us format our essays. I can't quite remember what it's called but you need three big ideas and three supporting details for each [big idea]. She would make us color code and that's how I remember because of the different colors. Now when I write an essay and it doesn't come to me right away I use that format to plan what I want to say.

In addition to strategies for specific tasks, participants expressed that they got the most out of classes with routines. When participant 4AC was asked to explain what effective teachers did differently, she responded that she knew what to expect in a typical class period and these teachers provided a structured environment where students knew what they should be doing throughout the class period.

Teacher passion. Teacher passion was discussed by two of the five participants in the AC pathway. Both participant 2AC and 4AC mentioned teacher passion several times when talking about skilled teachers. Participant 4AC shared, "I feel like it was a lot harder when teachers didn't seem to care about a subject. I would think to myself, all other teachers have passion for this, what's up with you not having any passion." Participant 4AC felt that it was unfair for teachers to expect students to be engaged when the teacher did not seem passionate about the lesson. She explained:

> If all the teacher does is talk out of the textbook, like with logarithms, it's hard for me…when teachers show me how they use what they are teaching me I know they are really passionate and then I want to know more.

Business Pathway. Students in the business pathway take marketing, accounting, and entrepreneurship classes eventually creating either a marketing or business plan as a culminating project. A few students also have the opportunity to participate in statewide performance-based assessments where they present their marketing or business plans to a panel of business professionals (D. Seppelfrick, personal communication, April 12, 2017). Four of the 28 participants were in the business pathway.

Knowing the learner. Each of the participants in the business pathway described a strong relationship with specific teachers. They each talked about a teacher, or teachers, who got to know them well, beyond just what was happening in class. The relationship they described provided comfort and made them feel safe to make mistakes. Participant 2B explained:

> My teachers were successful because they were willing, open, and relatable. They cared about our learning no matter how much we messed up…They were able to connect with many of the students and be able to share a personal relationship.

Participants in the business pathway described good teachers as those who got to know his or her individual needs and then provided the support needed to be successful in class. Each mentioned a teacher who was able to recognize when they needed help and then provided the necessary support. Participant 2B described how his teachers helped him feel successful in class, "They just sat down with me and if I didn't understand it they would go through the steps." He went on to describe the advice he would give a new teacher about how to help students. Participant 2B said, "I would say just keep checking on them for some people are not comfortable saying that they're struggling…like Ms. [G] she would always check on me and help me."

Participant 1B explains why it was helpful for her when her teachers knew her needs:

> Although some people are fast learners there are others who are not able to pick up on things as fast as others…Teachers can't be able to expect someone to pass the class if they do not truly understand what is going on…When a teacher tries to make things easier for you to learn it really helps people understand the content of the material and helps people understand it better.

When teachers get to know students they are better able to recognize how to meet individual needs and help them understand he content. Learning does not happen the same way for all students and a variety of approaches are necessary to help all students learn.

Relevance and application. Each of the participants in the business pathway discussed relevance and experiential learning when asked about learning experiences that helped them grow. Relevant skills included those related to participant's interests, or future goals, and skills that had real-world applications. While participant 4B expressed that she did not enjoy writing, her teachers helped her by giving "assignments based on what you are passionate about." Participant 1B described activities and assignments she felt contributed most to her learning and growth. She said, "Many of these things involved accounting class, computer class, being in student union, and participating in a school business that involved real merchandise." She expressed that these kinds of activities kept her focused and interested because she knew she wanted to pursue a career in business. Participant 3B shared that he was successful at math because "I just like numbers." All participants communicated that getting to practice skills by applying them in projects, or in real-world situations, resulted in deeper learning.

Modeling. Another theme that emerged from participants in the business pathway was modeling. When asked about learning experiences that were helpful, all participants talked about

teachers going through the steps of a problem or process and then guiding students as they followed those same steps. Participant 1B said:

> The teachers would teach you something and then make you do an example so that you can learn how to do something on your own. They also try to work through the examples with you so that they can make sure you understand the problem and how it works.

Participants 3B and 4B shared when they need to learn new things at work, watching someone else model the task and then trying it on their own helps them learn faster.

Individual support. Two of the four participants in this group mentioned one-on-one assistance as a factor in their success. Participant 1B expressed that good teachers were willing to work with individual students to help them understand new concepts and overcome challenges. She shared that when teachers make time to sit with students one-on-one it "really shows that the teacher cares about your learning." Participant 4B did not realize how important having individual assistance was for her until she started college. She reflected that most of the classes she did best in during high school were those where the teacher was willing to spend time with her outside of class. She explained, "When I needed help, I would go into class and ask teachers. Having a teacher help me I guess had a big impact on me getting my work done and understanding." When asked how teachers could have helped her more she said, "I would say having more one-on-one sessions to see how students are doing."

Health Services Pathway. Most students who select the health services (HS) pathway are interested in the medical field. Students in this pathway learn about first aid, medical terminology, and nurse aid skills. Most students participate in field experiences during the junior or senior year. These field experiences include shadowing medical professionals at both medical office and hospital settings (P. DePorto, personal communication, April 12, 2017).

Supportive relationships – knowing the learner. When discussing good teachers, all participants in the HS pathway mentioned teachers who developed relationships with them and knew their strengths and weaknesses. Participant 1HS described a teacher from elementary school who she felt had a big impact on her learning. She discussed challenges she had in school related to family and attendance issues and explained how this teacher was able to help her overcome these challenges. She explained that he recognized she enjoyed math and encouraged her to push herself. She stated:

> He would give me extra problems, not the ones we would do in class, and tell me that those were the kinds of problems they did in 7th grade. I got excited because I thought, oh my gosh, 7th graders do this stuff. I started staying in at recess so I could do more problems and he would give me pizza…I felt like I could come to him and I did not take it harshly when he would scold me about my attendance…I thought 'he wants to teach me something that will help me later' and that really meant a lot to me.

Each of the other participants also discussed specific teachers who they developed connections with that helped them realize their strengths or overcome challenges. These relationships helped participants feel confident in their abilities.

Hands-on experiences. The field experiences were an important learning experience for each of the participants in the HS pathway. When asked about the learning experiences that they found most helpful, all participants mentioned activities outside the classroom during which they were able to apply skills they were learning. Participant 3HS described learning experiences that helped him:

> The teacher would teach something and then we would practice in class and the teacher would help us. The teacher would make us do an example so we could learn how to do

> something on our own. Then we would have a time when we would go in the field and we could get more practice. Going in the field helped me because then I knew why I had to learn something and I could see other people as examples.

Each participant mentioned the combination of learning in class and then having an opportunity to learn in the field as helping him or her learn best.

Industrial Engineering and Technology Pathway. Within the IET pathway there are two main programs of study, building and construction and automotive technology. Students in the building and construction pathway learn woodworking, construction, and engineering skills. Students begin learning safety and proper use of tools, and eventually are able to design and build their own projects. In the automotive pathway, students learn about engines and how they operate. They learn tools and safety, and how to take apart and put back together the engine. The last course in the program of study is a metals technology class where students learn basics of welding. In both programs of study, practice in the shop setting is a regular part of the class routine (J. Johns, personal communication, April 12, 2017).

Supportive Relationships and Collaboration. The theme that came up most frequently for the participants in the IET pathway was related to supportive relationships and collaboration. The participants felt their good teachers were those they developed personal connections with. When describe the characteristics of a good teacher, each participant talked about a teacher they could talk to and be "friends" with, but still respect as a teacher, or authority figure. They described these teachers as people who they could have conversations and socialize with, but also felt these teachers were still professional.

Participants felt they learned best when they worked with others and were able to practice with one another. Developing relationships with classmates builds a system of support that

provides encouragement and promotes engagement. Participant 1IET explained, "I feel like the classes I liked the best and performed the best were the classes where the teacher talks to you and makes activities where everyone is involved." He goes on further to describe what he liked about working in groups:

> I feel like group work is a necessity. Just working alone on something and every person doing something alone can create a boring space, but when everyone's talking about a subject together and sharing opinions, some clashing against each other, it creates an environment that is productive but also enjoyable.

When participant 4IET was asked how teachers engaged her and the class, she talked about a teacher who incorporated partner activities and felt that helped make the class more engaging. Collaboration also helped students learn skills beyond just content. Participant 3IET describes how working in groups taught him a skill that he could apply even outside of school, "I found that working in groups helped us to interact with others…we learned to split responsibilities and work together to complete the assignment." He explained that this is a skill that has helped him be successful in college and work.

High expectations. All participants in this pathway also expressed that teachers helped them by pushing them and maintaining rigorous expectations. Participant 4IET explained that she had trouble asking questions when she did not understand something and often did not attempt difficult assignments. Teachers helped her by "telling me that I need to ask for help and insisting help for me." Participant 1IET talked about his AP physics teacher because he felt she employed strategies that helped him learn best. He said, "She expected everyone to learn and that really helped us out a lot." Participant 2IET explained that good teachers "see potential in kids" and "push them to do better."

Natural Resources Pathway. The NR pathway is made up of three programs of study: agriculture, Hawaiian studies, and marine science. Each program of study has a field study component where students are applying their learning. Partnerships with community organizations provide ongoing opportunities for students to learn in the field, whether to work at area farms, survey archaeological sites, or study ocean resources. Agriculture students learn about soil and propagation, and eventually manage a small production of crops (R. Fitzgerald, personal communication, April 15, 2017). Hawaiian studies students learn about forestry and environmental resource management in addition to Hawaiian culture (S. Bucasas, personal communication, April 15, 2017). Marine science students learn about aquaculture and manage the aquaculture facility where they grow limu ʻogo (seaweed) (D. Hoppe, personal communication, April 15, 2017).

Relationships and collaboration. As in the other pathways, participants in the NR pathway felt building relationships with students was something good teachers did differently than "bad" teachers. Participants in the NR pathway also talked about the uniqueness of students at Waiʻanae High School and explained that good teachers understood the community and how to help students. Participant 2NR's advice to a teacher new to Waiʻanae High School is:

> When you first come in knowing that our kids, Waiʻanae kids, come from a bumpy background…establish that line of discipline letting them know that you are the teacher but at the same time establishing relationships letting them know that you are there and they can come to you…school is sometimes a second home for kids who live in the keawes [brush behind the school].

Participant 4NR echoed the same sentiment when she described one of her good teachers. “If we were troubled she would take the time to listen and go on a personal level with us…she is taking the time out of her busy schedule to help us.” Participant 2NR also shared:

> Students in Wai‘anae High School might be a little hard headed at times, but it’s probably because of the life they are living in. But just having hope in them, will help them see that they can do things and they can be successful.

In addition to relationships with the teacher, participants in this pathway felt collaboration with classmates was important for their learning. Participant 4NR talked about a class she found very challenging and talked about how she feels the teacher could have helped her better:

> She could have made more group work. I know a lot of our assignments were individual work and I know we have to be responsible for our own learning. But, when I get together with people…it gives me more confidence in my answer when I know that there are other people that feel the same way as me about the answers.

Participant 3NR learned when taking a foreign language class that working with others was helpful for him. He shared this perspective:

> When we get into groups and practice and I know the structures, I feel like I’m trying to teach them as much as I’m trying to learn for myself as well…me teaching them helps me develop a new sense of ‘I know this’ compared to if I was just by myself trying to practice.

Participants discussed how working with others created a sense of shared responsibility. Each member of the group had kuleana (responsibility) to help the rest of the group be successful.

Relevant, Hands-on learning. All the participants in the NR pathway described themselves as hands-on learners and felt hands-on learning experiences could help all students. Participant 1NR said in describing some of the field experiences he had, "I personally am a hands on learner, but definitely for other kids, too, I feel like they benefited a lot." Participant 2NR felt most of her teachers at Wai'anae High School helped her, especially through hands-on learning experiences. She stated, "I loved that my teachers took the time to actually help the students at my school. Being both a visual and hands-on learner, the teaching styles that my teachers had made learning very easy." Participant 2NR.1 also felt hands-on experiences were better for engaging students. He said:

> We had an end of year camp where we would go to different sites and learn different things. We went to Coconut Island and He'eia and I feel like these places were better for students because it was more hands-on…It was a lot more entertaining than just seeing pictures in a book. I personally loved it a lot and it helped me so much.

Participants felt that they did better in classes when they were interested in the content. Participant 3NR stated, "This semester [in college] I decided to choose all classes I had interests in because we can actually do that and it turns out that if I have an interest in it I do better." He recalled that the classes he enjoyed most in high school were Japanese and culinary arts because they were subjects in which he had an interest.

Passion. Three out of five participants from the NR pathway discussed passion as a factor in their learning. Two participants discussed teacher passion as a characteristic of engaging teachers. Participant 4NR shared that she felt most engaged when "the teacher was passionate about what they were teaching." Participant 2NR expressed that teachers she

considered good had a "passion for teaching." Participant 3NR explained that he was most engaged in class when he was "passionate about the class."

Public and Human Services Pathway. The PHS pathway includes culinary and education programs of study, and the junior reserve officer training corps (JROTC) program. In each of the programs of study, students participate in practical experiences where they can apply skills outside of the classroom. In the culinary program, students learn safety and sanitation, knife skills and practice in the various kitchen stations (N. Ferriman, personal communication, April 20, 2017). Education program students learn about child development, observe classrooms, and eventually have an opportunity to deliver lessons with a cooperating teacher (K. Muranaka, personal communication, April 15, 2017). Students in the JROTC program participate in many community events and learn leadership skills.

Supportive Relationships. Participants in the PHS pathway described good teachers as those who developed relationships with them and encouraged them. Participant 3PHS explained that she only "liked" one class during her senior year and talked about how the teacher engaged students in that class. She described her teacher, "She guided us through everything we needed whether it was a mock interview, or the PTP, and she guided us to allow us to have the knowledge that we really needed…she was really helpful and that helped me successfully go to college." Participant 2PHS talked about how good teachers helped him be successful, "They wouldn't give up and let us fail. It taught me that even though I am not the best at something, always try harder. Now I am better at all of the things that I wasn't so good at before, so that helped a lot."

One aspect of encouraging relationships is knowing a student's goals and helping the student work to achieve those goals, not simply pushing students to meet requirements for college. Participant 1PHS explained the advice she would give to a new teacher,

> A lot of the time teachers like to push college on everyone, which is great, but sometimes college is not for everyone. Sometimes people are more hands on and want to do vocational work. So don't force feed them things that you think that they're supposed to do. Rather, kind of guide them to what they want to do.

Participant 4PHS said simply, "I think they cared about all of us and they would help each of us learn."

Relevant, Hands-on Experiences. Each of the participants in the PHS pathway felt they learned the most in the classes in which they were interested and from hands-on practice. Participant 3PHS explained, "I love reading books, but I really like hands-on projects because I get to physically touch things and look at them…when a teacher is teaching about science, show us the experiments we can do because I would learn better if I looked at it."

High expectations with support. Teachers that pushed them to do better gave participants in this pathway confidence in their abilities. Participant 4PHS recalled the difference between his senior English teacher and other English teachers. He mentioned a specific assignment and explained that his senior English teacher helped him in a very difficult subject because she did things that other teachers did not. He said:

> It was one of my first essays and I had a lot of spelling and stuff wrong. I had red ink all over the place and I just didn't want to do it because there was so much to redo. I told her [the English teacher] that it was too hard for me and I didn't know what to do. So, she walked me through things and sat with me to explain what quotes from the book meant.

She explained why I have to put a period here or there. It took her lots of time, but she did not give up on me or let me quit.

Participant 3PHS talked about her culinary arts teacher who expected students to behave like they were working in a restaurant kitchen. She shared, "The only class I really liked during my senior year was my culinary class. My teacher was really helpful because she motivated me to push through my struggles." Participant 1PHS echoed that she felt most successful in classes where teachers pressed her to persevere and did not let her quit when tasks were difficult.

Teacher passion. While only one participant in the PHS pathway mentioned teacher passion, Participant 1PHS reiterated thoughts shared by participants in other pathways. Her advice to new teachers was to be passionate about the subject. She conveyed that if a teacher is "really passionate" then that passion will excite students and "they might get into it as well."

Summary – Pathway Group Themes

Supportive relationships and hand-on learning were themes that came up in multiple pathways. Across pathways, several participants mentioned clear and high expectations. Table 2 below provides a visual representation where shading represents frequency. Dark shading indicates that each member of the group talked about that theme.

Table 2. Pathway Group Matrix

	AC	Business	HS	IET	NR	PHS
Clear expectations						
Modeling						
Supportive Relationships						
Collaboration						
Student passion						
Hands-on learning, real-world application						
Routine and structure						
Knowing the learner						
Relevance						
Individual support						
High expectations						
Teacher passion						

Part II – Academic Achievement Group Findings

After analyzing the data based on pathway groupings, I regrouped participants into academic achievement groups. Below are the themes that arose when participants were re-assigned to these groupings.

Group 1 – AP/Honors. Participants in this group took an advanced placement course, or maintained a grade point average above 3.5. This group has representation of each of the six pathways.

Making personal connections. One aspect of relationships that all participants in this group shared was a personal connection. Participants appreciated when teachers would get to know them beyond the classroom. Engaging students in a lesson often means connecting to them as individuals first. As participant 1IET explained:

> I feel like you should be able to engage in conversation and help this person on a personal level and some teachers don't do that. They're just very professional with you and some kids aren't able to adjust to that quickly enough and learn as well. So, it's ineffective for those kids.

Participants in this group described relationships where teachers would support individual students because they knew each student's needs. Participant 1AC shared:

> The teachers that created personal relationships with students…those teachers were definitely more effective because they knew they couldn't just teach a class the same things because each student was at different levels. So, they would take some time out of the day, not a whole lot, but just to get them to where they should be. Then the whole class would end up being on the same level even though the teacher didn't teach the whole class the same thing.

Participant 1PHS shared similar characteristics of a good teacher who would check on students individually during class to identify misunderstandings and encouraged students to seek help because "no question was a stupid question."

Relevant lessons. All participants felt they learned best when a topic was engaging and teachers showed how the learning could be applied in future endeavors, either in work or college. Participant 1B explained how lessons in her business class helped her:

> These things have really helped my success in the future…I am able to relate to many of the things we learned in high school and it makes so much more sense now that I am working. I am able to understand why a business does certain things and the procedures that need to be followed.

Participant 1PHS described her excitement when she reached the point in college where she could focus on her major. She said, "You finally get into you major and you finally understand this is what I want to do…you start learning about it and you enjoy going to class and learning about it."

Participants also described student interest and hands-on learning experiences when talking about effective learning experiences. Participant 1AC shared that she found it difficult to retain lessons when she was not interested in the subject. She said, "If I'm not interested I'm not going to remember. I can read about it, but I won't remember anything." Participant 1PHS felt she learned better in English than math because she did not enjoy math. She also shared, "Kids here generally learn more from hands-on experiences than just giving papers or reading from books." Participant 1IET shared that incorporating hands-on practice, and not relying simply on lectures and notes, kept students engaged in learning. He stated, "Finding activities to engage

students, not typical notes and PowerPoint will keep kids more interested. Do something different, not the same thing everyday. Change it up."

High expectations. Participants in this group described teachers that push students to reach potential as good teachers. Participant 1AC spoke of two teachers who she felt were most supportive of her. She shared:

> They both pushed my limits. That's basically what they were doing. They wanted me to come out of my box because they had certain expectations that they knew I could reach so they could try to edge me to it, which they did. Because they supported me in high school, I don't really need the support in college because I know I am capable of things because of them.

Participant 1PHS described similar characteristics when she talked about teachers she felt were supportive. She said, "We knew they would be there for us. Even when we doubted ourselves…they would push you and say 'you can do it, don't even think about doubting yourself.' That relieved my anxiety and helped me push through challenges."

Modeling and one-on-one help. Each participant also shared that modeling and offering individual assistance was important for his or her learning. When asked how teachers could help students, participant 1B stated, "A teacher should go through the problems a few times…to make it easier for students." Participant 1AC felt it was also helpful when her teacher would have students model for each other. She shared, "He would randomly select a few people to display and show how they finished it so that made everyone want to finish." Participant 1HS explained that she learns first by seeing someone else and then trying herself.

When asked to describe ways teachers engaged students, participant 1IET shared, "Anything where they move themselves from being at the board to being with you and working

with you I think just helps out so much." Students may be willing to make more of an effort when someone is willing to sit along side them. Participant 1B explained, "When you are willing to put in the time to really learn the material, it feels really good when a teacher stays and sits with you and helps you put it the time." The extra time offered could also aid students in overcoming challenges that they may otherwise choose to avoid. Participant 1PHS described how her teachers helped her get over her fear of math, which allowed her to persevere and take on advanced classes. She shared:

> I had the best math teachers who would sit me down and be like 'you're gonna learn this, we're gonna help you through it, you're gonna stay after class if you need to.' I took AP Calculus senior year and I thought I was going to fail, but my teacher Mr. [Y] was so good. He helped me get over my anxiety and helped me see I was just psyching myself out and I realized I could do it.

Collaboration. Another theme that emerged in this group was collaboration. Three out of the six participants mentioned working with groups as beneficial. Both participant 1AC and 1IET discussed how collaborating classmates helped them to be more productive and creative. Participant 1PHS shared about working with a group made it easier to ask questions. She said, "It felt good because I could ask a question and not feel like I would sound like an idiot. If I didn't feel comfortable asking in front of the class, I could ask one of my partners."

Group 2 – High-end Average. Participants were assigned to group 2 if their GPA was between 2.5 and 3.5. All participants in this group mentioned both relationships and relevant experiences as factors that helped them learn. Another theme that came up in this group was modeling.

Understanding needs. Participants described good teachers as those who built relationships with students and could differentiate to meet their needs. Participant 2NR.1 explained that his good teachers knew him well and came at lessons from "different angles" when they recognized students were "struggling." Participant 2AC shared:

> You need to be someone who students can come to for help. Like teachers who ask students to explain their thought process and help them. Not necessarily say "you did it wrong here, do it like this." But, be someone I can go to that is willing to help me understand in a way that I am trying to understand it.

Participant 2IET also described a good teacher as someone recognized how to help "which student and at what time." Participant 2NR expressed that teachers were "more successful with students because they would actually create a bond with students" and this allowed teachers to figure out how to best support each individual.

Relevant experiences. Learning experiences participants found helpful included hands-on experiences. Participant 2AC felt project-based learning was much more effective at engaging students and helping students know how to apply skills they were learning. When Participant 2HS spoke of characteristics of a she felt was less effective she shared, "It's just that kids here generally learn more from hands on experiences than just giving papers or reading from books. I think it was just inexperience on her part and she needed to work a little more on teaching strategies." Participant 2IET felt that learning through hands-on projects was more effective because "they actually made learning interesting."

Modeling. Three out of seven participants in this group considered modeling and feedback to be important for their learning. Participant 2NR said, "I really appreciated when our teachers would write out everything on the board, giving or showing examples, helping you one-

on-one when you really wasn't fully understanding what was being explained." She went on to explain that teachers were "not helpful" when they "didn't really teach, but just talked." Participant 2AC felt teachers that "guided students in the right direction" rather than giving answers, or "making sure and checking that you got the right answers," gave students the skills to "find answers in a world that we couldn't possibly imagine."

Group 3 – Low-end Average. Participants in group three earned less than a 2.5 GPA. All participants talked about high expectations when describing good teachers. All participants in this group also felt collaborating with others and participating in hands-on experiences was helpful for learning. Other themes that emerged include collaboration and self-responsibility.

High expectations with support. Each participant described a good teacher as one who pushed him or her to continue trying, even when a task was challenging. These good teachers also provided support to help overcome those challenges, whether through tutoring or strategies. Participant 3B stated, "If I was struggling in a certain skill, they made me keep trying until I got it down or told me to just keep practicing." He went on to explain that teachers facilitated his success after high school because they "pushed me to make sure I was on track" and made sure he "wasn't goofing around." Participant 3NR also explained is not helpful when teachers lower expectations if they feel students are struggling. He stated, "If you push a kid through school, you allow them to go into the world not ready and not prepared." Collaboration, with both the teacher and other students, was one of the strategies these participants felt supported them to meet high expectations.

Relevant, hands-on experiences. Having an opportunity to practice skills in hands-on experiences was another strategy group 3 participants felt was helpful. Participant 3AC.1 felt enjoyed learning and felt more confident in her abilities when she was able to practice a skill by

applying it in a project, or to solve a problem. Participant 3IET said, "I think class is better when we get to do an activity that is hands-on, or in groups, after the teacher introduces something." Participant 3PHS felt successful in math because of practice in her culinary class. She said, "Within our culinary class we would do hands-on activities to cook and in order to cook we needed to learn measurements which was math and that's where I learned moth of my math skills."

Collaboration. Three out of six participants in group 3 preferred group work to individual tasks. Participant 3NR shared, "I would choose to be in a group because I feel like you can get a lot more done instead of just making one thing you can make three things and they will all be good." He also felt collaboration helped him develop leadership skills. Participant 3PHS spoke about how her culinary teacher collaborated with the class. She said:

> She would interact with the children. It was more than just her work we worked together. She would make her work her family so when she teaches she communicates with us in our own language and in our own ways, not just hers. That really helped me because when she worked with us she communicated well.

Self-responsibility. Two participants in this group brought their own responsibility as an import factor in their learning. Participant 3NR talked about failing several classes in high school. He explained that at that time "there really wasn't anything that teachers could have done" to motivate him to do better in school. He reflected on what changed and how he was able to improve. He said:

> I felt like I really had to prove myself not only to my family that I let down, but mostly to me…I felt like I needed to do the best I could, so the next semester went really well. I think it was because I felt like I needed to prove myself.

Participant 3PHS had a similar experience. She shared that she was motivated to pass her senior English class because she felt a responsibility to her friends and family.

Group 4 – Additional Needs. Group 4 was made up of participants who received additional support in the form of special education or English language learner (ELL) services. These participants came from each pathway and had different GPAs.

Supportive relationships. All group 4 participants described good teachers as those who supported them and developed relationships that extended beyond class. Each described teachers who they felt cared because they took time to check on them and listen to their concerns. Participant 4NR shared her advice for new teachers, "Get to know them on a personal level because once the student knows you care then they will start to care about your class." She went on to speak about advisors who helped her navigate the college application process, which was new for her and her family. She said, "When they [college counselors] were there they were a really big help to me because I knew some stuff about college but I never knew as much…I feel so much more prepared." Participant 4B shared similar ideas when she described the advice she would give to a teacher who is new to Waiʻanae. She stated, "I would tell them to get to know each student personally…and try to help them progress as a student to learn new skills."

High expectations with support. Having confidence in students' ability to meet high expectations was another element of supportive relationships discussed by group 3 participants. Participant 4HS shared that a good teacher did not give up on her or let her fail. She went on further to explain that good teachers did not just assign challenging tasks and expect her to figure out how to accomplish the task on her own. Good teachers helped her to complete the task by breaking it into smaller steps and giving her feedback as she completed each step. Participant 4AC talked about similar experiences and gave her explanation of why she considered a teacher

ineffective. She shared, “A teacher who throws the work at the students and doesn’t explain it fully and leaves them [students] to figure it out is what I would say is a bad teacher.”

Collaboration. Every group 4 participant mentioned collaboration as an aspect of effective learning experiences or as an approach employed by effect teachers. Participant 4AC said, “What helped me to grow the most was working with groups…the big projects were group projects so if you’re not talking to your group you’re gonna fail. That helped me get my work done and improve my work.” Participant 4IET and 4B both expressed that they preferred group tasks and shared those teachers who encouraged them to work with others were more engaging. Participant 4IET said, “He [teacher] made us do partner activities and in the end we shared with the class what we did…teamwork really helped me because I really liked working with others…I had trouble asking questions about how to do my work and now I do that.”

Relevant experiences. Participants in this group felt they learned more from relevant experiences grounded in an interest. When participant 4B was asked how teachers got her interested in learning she answered:

> I think most of the assignments were based on what you were passionate about. Like in writing [class], as long as it fulfilled the criteria, you could do your research on what you are passionate about or love to do.

Participant 4PHS said he enjoyed and learned most from Hawaiian history because he “liked learning about our culture” and felt “we should know where we come from.” Participant 4IET connected most with a skill she learned in an after school program. She said, “I learned in PALS like when Ms. A would help us learn teamwork and stuff, that really helped me. I really love teamwork and working with each other.” Participant 4AC found learning math difficult and

"wouldn't understand," but when she used math in physics she "completely understood it" because she enjoyed science and physics piqued her interest.

Modeling and feedback. Modeling and feedback helped three out of six participants in group four feel more confident in their learning. Participant 4B shared:

> My writing teacher does everything on Google Drive so while I'm doing my essay she can go through and see what I am writing. As I'm writing, she comments that I am doing good right away, or she tells me when I need to fix something. That is a helpful.

She also explained that she grew the most when she was playing volleyball. She explained how her coach helped her improve. She said:

> If we needed help she would pull us to the side and she would show us what she wanted us to do. Then she would have us try it and tell us if we did it right or not. I think my teachers that did things like my coach really helped me learn more in class.

Participant 4AC explained similar strategies used by her digital media teacher to help her improve. She stated:

> The teacher would come in and tell us what we were doing, sometimes they would show us themselves or give us an example. Then they would walk around and look at our work and as we were doing it they would come up and tell us they really liked it or we should fix it.

Summary - Academic Achievement Group Themes

Relationships, or aspects of relationships, were mentioned in all academic achievement groups. Relevant experiences and high expectations were also mentioned frequently across all 4 groups. Table 3 provides a summary of the themes with shading to indicate how frequency. Dark shading indicates that each participant in the group mentioned a theme.

Table 3. Academic Achievement Group Matrix

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Making personal connections				
Relevant lessons and experiences				
High expectations				
Modeling and one-on-one help				
Collaboration				
Understanding needs				
Modeling				
Self-responsibility				
Supportive relationships				

Part III – Focus Group Findings

After the initial phase of coding data to identify categories, a small group of participants was convened to further explore themes that arose. The focus group members were participant 1B, 2PHS, and 2HS. Five other participants were invited to participate in the focus group and six were scheduled to participate, but only these three attended. The questions asked of the focus group were related to those broad themes that were common across both pathway and academic achievement groups.

Supportive relationships. Focus group members were asked to describe how they felt relationships with teachers impacted their learning experiences. All three felt that having caring, supportive teachers was one of the most important factors in a positive learning experience. Participants' opinions support existing literature that teachers are one of the most important components of schools that are able to meet the "general well-being of indigenous students" (Demmert, 2011, p. 3). The focus group participants shared examples of how teachers fostered these supportive relationships.

Participant 2PHS shared, "When there are teachers who genuinely care and when they make a connection with the students, that's when I learn the most, when I knew the teacher

generally had my best interest at heart." Participant 2PHS also explained that he did not feel it was important to learn when he did not feel like his teachers cared about him. Villegas (2008) speaks of the power that relationships have on people and how it can draw them in to an experience. Participant 1B shared the same perception:

> Teachers making a connection with me, making me feel like I could trust them, go to them, made me more open to pay attention to what they were teaching me… I was totally into it 100% because it would seem like you guys were 100% invested in me and what I was doing.

Another characteristic of supportive relationships was having an "open-door policy." Focus group members felt it was important to feel like teachers were available and accessible, even for help with issues not related to school. Participant 2HS shared:

> The "open-door policy" is the most important thing…make the connection to let them know you're not just the teacher, that if you need me I'll be here for you. And, I think to be more specific staying after school, or even recess and stuff…and for the teachers that I remember; it was always those teachers who would take me in at recess or after school.

He explained that when a teacher was available outside of class, and more so when they encouraged him to come by whenever he needed to, it made him feel like he was important and that he should make the same effort. Participant 1B shared similar thoughts about her "favorite" teacher:

> He was good because he was willing to help us when he didn't have to work with us. His room was open for us to do any kind of work and he would help us as much as he could even if it was Spanish, even though he was a math teacher.

Finally, focus group members explained that the teachers who developed relationships with them were able to help them find their strengths and overcome their weaknesses. Participant 1B described a teacher who, by incorporating collaborative projects and assigning groups, was able to help her find out what she did well. She shared, "She taught us we all could be good at something…I was good at something and after doing a project I knew what I could contribute to the group the next time." Participant 2HS also described how working in a group on projects helped her learn to collaborate. She explained that she preferred working by herself and her teacher realized that she was did not like working with others. Her teacher encouraged her to be the group leader and gave her suggestions about how to break a project into tasks so each group member had clear expectations. She shared, "Forcing me to be part of a group helped me be more open to other people. I had to learn how to delegate and not take the whole load on myself." She felt she learned how to overcome what she considered a weakness because her teacher knew working with others was something she was not good at and helped her develop collaboration skills.

Relevant experiences. Focus group participants felt hands-on experiences and relevant content were important for their learning. All three participants felt it was important for teachers to connect what was in the "textbook" to something hands-on. Participant 2HS shared that if the teacher made a "real-life connection" and explained how concepts could be "applied to my life" then she was more likely to pay attention to the lesson.

Participants also mentioned that they were more likely to learn when they had a passion for what they were learning. Participant 2PHS stated:

> I was super passionate about that topic and I never worked harder than…I put my heart and soul into it. I feel like the projects that let you work on something that you're passionate about you're always going to give you 100%.

Participant 1B also felt she was more engaged when she enjoyed what she was learning. She described her calculus class and why she felt she learned most from that teacher. Relevance for her was not just interest in the subject, but came from the process of learning calculus. She said, "in [Y's] class it was like ok here's what we are gonna learn today and it took me two days to finish and that's kinda like what I enjoyed the most actually having to think, actually having to work."

Rigorous expectations. In addition to fostering supportive relationships and facilitative relevant learning experiences, focus group members described good teachers as those who maintained high expectation and pushed them to meet those expectations. Participant 1B described a math teacher who pushed her to try harder when he noticed her grades were falling. She explained that she felt a responsibility to work harder in that class because she did not want to disappoint her teacher. Participant 2PHS responded to participant 1B, "He held you to a higher standard. That's what I like my teachers to do, hold me to a higher standard." He explained that he enjoyed when teachers would push him to pursue higher grades because he liked feeling challenged.

Part IV – Cross-Case Analysis of Findings

Participants were assigned to two groups for this study, a pathway group and an academic achievement group. In the two previous sections, themes that emerged in each group were discussed. A discussion of the higher level, broad themes that represent common threads amongst all participants will be presented in this part of the data analysis. The order in which the

broad themes are presented is based on the frequency of each theme within the data as whole. These broad themes include supportive relationships, relevant experiences, and rigorous expectations. Sub-themes of each of the broader themes are also presented in the sections that follow.

Supportive relationships. It was clear after the first two interviews that relationships have an impact on student learning at Wai‘anae High School and would probably be a theme that emerged. This early analysis turned out to be correct and every participant mentioned relationships in some way as a quality of good teaching and as something they felt helped them learn.

Knowing the learner. Several participants described a relationship with a teacher who knew their individual strengths and weaknesses as being an important factor in their learning. Participant 4NR says,

> I am closer to teachers that really involve themselves in each student’s lifestyle. Getting to know each student and making sure they are on the right track. I connect most to teachers who are in the mindset of helping all students succeed.

Teachers who take the time to get to know students are set apart from those who do not make that same effort. Participant 4B states,

> I would say that’s the difference between them, one takes more time to get to know their students and push them to be better and some don’t. They just see them as a grade instead of as a human being, so they are just seeing the grade and don’t care about you are anything you do.

Participant 1AC also says, “I think what he was missing that other teachers were doing was creating a relationship with the students.” Because a relationship is reciprocal, it is also important

that students get to know teachers and be able to see them as people not just authority figures. Participant 2NR.1 says,

> For me good teachers were better at building a relationship with the kids and getting to know the kids on a level that is more than just a teacher to student. Because for me personally, I love when I can just sit down and talk to my teachers whether it be about personal things or rather it just be about things in general, how school was going, how I'm doing in sports, and other things like that.

One of the elements of supportive relationships participants talked about was a teacher's awareness of the individual strengths and weaknesses of students. Participant 2IET stated, "A good teacher in my eyes, is one that recognizes and knows how to handle which student and at what time."

One of the overarching ideas participants conveyed as essential to developing supportive relationships was a teacher knowing students, and in their descriptions knowing students means going beyond knowing names and interests. Participant 2NR describes a supportive relationship as she explains the advice she would give to a teacher who is new to Waiʻanae High School:

> I would say establish relationships and let students know that you are the teacher, but you are also here to teach more than social studies or math. Let students know, "I am here so you can come to me and I can help with anything you need." If a teacher can establish themselves as a teacher and as someone that students can trust they will definitely succeed in whatever class they're teaching.

When teachers developed connections to students that extended beyond the classroom walls, participants felt supported. Several mentioned teachers who would open up their classrooms and encouraged students to come to them whenever they needed to talk even if it was not related to

school or their class. These teachers often came early and stayed late so students would have a place to go and someone to talk to. Some participants even mentioned that teachers would get to know their individual home situations and do as much as they could to provide extra support, such as bringing lunch, helping with college, scholarship, and even job applications, giving wake up calls, and driving students home after school so they could stay for practices, tutoring, and other extra-curricular activities. Participant 2IET stated, "Good teachers care about their students. It's the after school tutoring, extra deadline time, or in my case, the class to runaway to when I felt other teachers didn't understand me." Participant 1PHS described similar characteristics:

> I guess it was more than just teaching for them. They created an actual relationship with us. We knew we could go to them and not even talk about school, we could just vent about our problems because high school was fun but we had issues. They were there for us and we always knew they would be there for us.

These supportive teacher-student relationships were reciprocal in that these teachers also shared their own experiences with students so that students could connect to them first as individuals and then as teachers. They would share about their families, past experiences, struggles, and successes so students would know more about them. Several participants talked about this as an aspect of a teacher who was good and that they knew cared about them.

Teachers who maintain high expectations and understand the potential of students was another key factor in student learning discussed by participants. Participants talked about how teachers were able to push them to meet higher expectations than they would have on their own. Because the good teachers knew their students, they could scaffold learning by providing appropriate strategies and encouragement rather than setting students up to fail by setting the bar

high without appropriate support. These good teachers also had the confidence that students sometimes did not have in themselves and that motivated students to achieve. Participant 4PHS described the teachers he thought considered good teachers:

> I think they cared about us and they would try to help each of us learn. They wouldn't give up on us and just let us fail. They wouldn't set us up for failure even if we doubted ourselves. They would always help me out even though I felt like just not doing it cause I didn't know how.

In contrast he described a teacher that he felt was not so good:

> I think this teacher she would always just give us a lot of work and even when we are still learning the subject she would give us a test. It was hard taking the test when we were still getting to know the subject and I felt like she rushed us.

Several participants (n=10) mentioned that when a teacher recognized they were struggling and then took the time to provide individual assistance that addressed specific needs, they felt they learned more. One of the strategies teachers offered to help students overcome weaknesses that was mentioned by several participants was one-on-one help, and that assistance did not necessarily need to come from the teacher. In classrooms where teachers, other students, and tutors were available to help with individual needs, participants felt more successful. Participants expressed that they were more willing and likely to seek out individual help when they had developed a relationship with the teacher. Both participant 4NR and 4B shared that when the teacher would offer one-on-one help during a lesson they felt more confident about learning difficult material. When a teacher was willing to offer individual assistance outside of class time, participants felt the teacher cared about them and their learning.

Fostering collaboration - 'ohana. Culturally relevant teachers foster community in the classroom and encourage cooperation (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Learning is collaborative and students work together, teach each other, and support one another toward reaching a common goal. Several participants described good teachers as those who were able to foster collaborative relationships among students. Students felt supported when they knew it was acceptable to count on classmates when they needed help. Many mentioned preferring to work in groups rather than individually because it allowed them to get support from peers when they were unclear and that felt less intimidating than asking the teacher for help all the time. Participant 4NR said,

> For me I love it when we get to work in groups and talk about the assignment because its not just my knowledge that I'm going through, I'm picking other peoples brains and seeing what they know about the assignment and helping myself and also helping everyone else at the same time.

Participant 1AC describes how group work allowed her to develop creativity as she shared ideas with others, "We got to work in a group where everyone got to be and use their creative skills and you would learn from them and they would learn from you."

Collaboration allowed students to not just master content for the course, but also taught them how to work in groups with others, which several mentioned as a skill they found helpful in many contexts beyond school. Participate 2IET commented, "I found that working in groups helped us to interact with others. When we did projects on Early Empires or governments, we would split the responsibilities between the team members. Working together to complete the assignment."

When relationships are developed in school, students form bonds that encourage them to push each other to be successful. These bonds sometimes mitigate the negative influences that

would otherwise become barriers to students' learning. Once these bonds form students have a system of support that extends beyond biological connections. Participant 3PHS, a student in the culinary pathway describes a relationship she developed with another student in the same courses.

> Without her helping me and telling me, 'Oh, you need to go to class because if not we're not going to walk across the stage together.' So I thought I'm not going to break her heart because she's my best friend. I decided I'm going to do this for her and do it for my family and that's what motivated me to pass that class.

Participant 1PHS is in the arts and communication pathway. Most of the learning activities in this pathway are project-based where students work in groups to complete the tasks. Early on in the junior year students form groups that work on various projects, including projects for real clients. This participant speaks about the sense of family that develops during these activities and how it helped him as a learner, "Everyone is very family driven and they create groups and everyone is very strongly bound to those groups and I felt like that really helped me."

Many of the projects and activities in the marine science pathway are also collaborative, group tasks. At the beginning of each year the teacher organizes a weekend retreat where juniors and seniors participate in team building and form the groups that will become their lab groups for class. Over the course of the junior and senior year, these lab groups are responsible for maintaining a tank in the program's aquaculture facility where limu 'ogo (a species of seaweed) is grown. Throughout the school year there are other activities where these groups work on projects together both within and outside of the classroom. Participant 2NR.1 speaks about how these activities impacted him,

> One of the things that I found very beneficial from high school in marine science was we had a beginning and an end of year camp. It focused more on team building and learning how to work with others, even all the people that you no like, people you may not know and people you may not necessarily get along with. It helped me a lot being that I am in hospitality now.

Being a positive influence. Teachers who fostered supportive relationships did so by creating a positive atmosphere for learning. Participant 2NR explains, "They would make their students comfortable, clearing their heads and making sure they were always thinking positive." Creating a space where students feel safe to make mistakes and are not afraid to be criticized is important for learning activities to be effective. Participant 3NR felt the class where he learned best was a very positive place and he felt safe to have fun while at the same time learning difficult material.

A positive classroom environment can help to mitigate some of the circumstances students face that keep them from learning. Students are facing difficult situations, which may prevent them from focusing on lessons and may feel they are not able to succeed in school. Participant 3AC says:

> All they need is a little push of encouragement and positivity to get them through. Students at Wai‘anae High School might be a little hardheaded at times, but it's because of the life they are living in, you do not even know. But having hope in them, it can help them see the can do things and be successful. Encourage them to strive and do better.

Relationships between teachers and students are especially impactful on older students and those from socio-economically disadvantaged communities (Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011, p. 520). Participants in my study are both "older students" and many came from

"disadvantaged economic backgrounds." All of the participants (28 out of 28) interviewed spoke about relationships having an impact someway on their learning. Relationships can be characterized in many different ways. "Viewing adult-child relationships as embedded within the context of effective teaching and learning dispels the notion that teachers can simply motivate students by being 'nice' to them" (Davis, 2003, p. 212). The nature of relationships, as participants described them, goes deeper than cordial interactions between teacher and students.

Relevant experiences. When participants were asked what type of learning experiences they felt helped them learn, the vast majority (25 out of 28) mentioned relevance as a characteristic of those experiences. Most participants were not able to remember specific assignments or instructional strategies used in the classroom that helped them learn. However, they were able to describe broad concepts and a few had fond memories of projects even if they could not remember the specific deliverables required. Like relationships, the descriptions of relevance were unique to each participant based on their experiences, but there were a few characteristics each participant described when speaking about relevance. Common threads within the theme of relevance were connections, passion, and hands-on experiences.

Connections to future, familiar, or interests. Participants expressed they learned more when there was a connection between the content and something they felt was important either because it was a necessary skill or they were interested in the topic. In most instances, the teacher was integral to making those connections for students. Participant 2IET shared:

> For me learning was interesting when we were given material and teachers would explain to us in ways that we could relate, math for instance. I played basketball all my life but would've never looked at it as basic geometry, like the arc and angle your arms are in when shooting the ball.

If participants had a strong interest in a particular career, the activities they felt were most helpful were those that helped them prepare for that career. Participant 4B knew she wanted to pursue a career in business and the learning activities she found most beneficial were "building your resume and the PTP [personal transition plan]." She goes on further to explain that these activities were similar to many things she was learning in college and helped her to be prepared. She felt she learned from and enjoyed classes like accounting most because "that was the career I wanted in the future and to this day it is still helpful."

Other participants did not have a clear career goal in high school, but found learning activities valuable when the content was connected to skills they felt were necessary for the future. For participant 4PHS, speaking in front of an audience was not a skill he felt confident about in high school, but he understood that it was necessary for his future plans. Despite his fear of speaking "proper English" and making a mistake in front of the class, he did the required presentations in his senior English course and felt they were the assignments he learned from most. Participant 1B shared the same sentiment. She said, "I learned and enjoyed the most when teachers would teach us things that could help us with our future." Participant 4IET enjoyed lessons that helped her build teamwork and collaboration skills because she was able to apply those skills to the activities she participated in outside of class.

Whether related to a future goal, or just a personal interest, participants felt they learned more when they enjoyed the subject or content of a lesson. Participant 4AC did not feel successful in math, but enjoyed physics. She shared, "I always enjoyed science and when I took physics I thought it was cool, but it was so weird because I wouldn't understand math but when we had to do the same things in physics I completely understood them." When I asked participant 2NR.1 about concepts he felt were easiest to retain, he said:

> I feel like music was something that I just picked up right away, everything from reading notes to learning chords and learning new instruments. I found that I really enjoyed that class and it was really easy for me to retain the content, not just learn it but remember it.

While learning activities were more effective when participants were interested in a subject area, the opposite also seems to be true. Participants felt that learning was challenging when they were not interested in a topic, or if they had not been successful at that subject in the past. Participant 1AC explained that she found it difficult to remember concepts if she was not interested in them and Participant 1PHS found math especially difficult to learn because it was a "big anxiety" thing for her.

In many instances, the teacher plays an important role in making connections for students. Several participants describe teachers who storytelling, including stories of personal experiences, to help students see how the lesson was connected to something familiar.

Passion. Participant 2NR shares:

> Teachers that I have considered being good had the passion for teaching, they didn't just show up to work to get paid, they showed up to help us learn and succeed. These teachers would find every possible way to make learning less difficult to understand.

Passion can be defined as "an object of deep desire or deep interest" (Passion, Merriam-Webster.com, 2017). Many participants shared that when a teacher lacked passion for a topic, it did not seem relevant or important to learn. Passion for teaching and a subject was also a characteristic of good teachers mentioned by several participants. In addition, participants stated that they learned when they were passionate about a topic.

Participant 1PHS explains how she feels a teacher's passion for a subject can impact students, "if you're really passionate about it, then kids will know that you're passionate about it

and they might get into it as well." Building relationships and showing students care was the most commonly reported characteristic of a good teacher, but according to several participants how much a teacher cared for the content was also important. Participant 2HS explained that in her classes when teachers were passionate about a subject, or a lesson, students would be more engaged. Participant 2AC went further to explain how he felt teachers could express their passion, "showing that you think about things and you apply things to the real world in your own personal life shows that you are passionate about something."

When a teacher is passionate about teaching and content, participants felt students would be more willing to learn. Likewise, participants felt their own passion for a subject had an impact on their learning. Participant 4B found writing challenging and when her writing teacher allowed her to write on topics about which she was passionate, it was not as difficult. Students were more willing to spend time and effort on learning when the content was deeply meaningful. Participant 1AC excelled in her courses and spent many hours doing projects for outside clients because she "found her passion in designing." After graduation she remained close to the program returning as an intern to serve as a mentor for high school students in the program. Passion for the subject allowed her to master the content and learn it well enough to teach others.

Hands-on experiences. Most participants (20 out of 28) preferred learning activities that allowed them to practice the skills being taught. All six of the pathways offered at Wai'anae High School offer field experiences for students where students can gain practical experience. While not all participants interviewed took advantage of those experiences, all of the participants who did participate in a field experience felt practical understanding was beneficial. For participant 1HS, going out to the field after learning and studying in class reinforced her learning and allowed her to retain the skills better. Participant 1IET described a typical day in the class

where he felt he learned best, “The teacher would introduce the lesson and explain what we were going to learn, then we might do something like read, and that was usually followed with a hands-on activity. It taught us more than just textbooks and notes.”

When a skill or content is difficult, incorporating hands-on activities may help students to overcome challenges. Math was difficult for participant 1PHS and despite multiple explanations and practice problems she found some concepts very challenging to grasp. However, when given the opportunity to apply the concepts in a hands-on activity, for example when using manipulatives, she felt more successful. No incorporating hands-on practice was a characteristic participant 1PHS described in a “bad” teacher. She stated, “I think it was just inexperience on her part, kids here generally learn more from hands-on experiences than just give papers or reading from books.”

Rigorous expectations. Participants conveyed that in addition to developing supportive relationships and making learning relevant, good teachers also held high-expectations for students and encouraged students to tackle challenging content. When teachers maintained rigorous expectations and helped students to achieve high standards, students learned to be confident in their abilities and were willing to take on more challenging tasks. Participant 2IET provides a concise description of a good teacher, “They see potential in kids that the kids themselves don’t see and push them to do better.” Participant 1B further explains how this might impact students, “When a teacher sees potential they really push students to excel and do better. This shows that they really care for your learning and helps students see that they can push themselves to do better things.”

Beyond setting a high bar, good teachers also encouraged students to persevere. Students were able to develop perseverance when teachers provided support when students were faced

with learning that was challenging. Participant 4IET was challenged to teach her group how to complete a task for a competition that was judged by an outside audience. The task itself was new to her and being a leader was even more unfamiliar. She explained that her teacher recognized that she was frustrated after a few minutes and encouraged her. The teacher modeled the task for her and gave her some suggestions for how she could engage her group mates. She said, "He guided me even when I did not think I was going to be able to get it. He told me I could do it even if he had to take me step by step." After that experience she realized that she was a capable leader and continued to seek out leadership roles in her classes.

When asked to offer advice to teachers new to Waiʻanae High School, several participants included pushing students to do better as an important factor to being successful with students. Participant 2NR offered, "I think the best thing a teacher can do is to never give up on a student." Participant 3B shared, "Be willing to give your time, work through details, make things easier, and push students to do better."

Chapter 5: Discussion and Reflection

Eia ka hana hoʻi a ke aloha
So here then is the labor of love

Na uʻi ʻuluwehi o ka ʻāina
The many beauties that adorn the land

Hili ʻia e ka maile me ka palai
Maile braided with palapalai

Anoʻai ke welina aloha e
A greeting, a fond greeting of love

In many mele, the last verse often recounts earlier lyrics and provides a summary of the essential meaning of the mele. Similar to the last verse of a song, this chapter provides a summary of the essential findings, and discusses impacts and implications of the study for future practice. So here then is my own labor of love. I weave together the findings with existing literature, "the many beauties that adorn the land," to provide meaningful answers to my research questions.

Prior to western contact, Native Hawaiians thrived in a sophisticated society that was self-sufficient (Kanaʻiaupuni, 2004). Economic, agricultural, and educational systems functioned to sustain the people without the need for external resources (Benham & Heck, 1998; Kawakami, 1999; Meyer, 1998). Unfortunately, changes that occurred after Westerners arrived had a "powerful impact" on each of these systems "significantly decreasing the control of Native Hawaiians to direct their future" (Kawakami, 1999, p. 20). Kawakami (1999) reports, "Since the advent of Western influence in these islands, formal education has separated Native Hawaiian students' culture of home and community from school culture" (p. 18). Separating home and school culture runs counter to existing research that indicates students perform better when teachers are able to bridge home and school (Yamauchi & Tharp, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1995). The effects of having to give up innate ways of knowing and doing to conform to Western

expectations has had a profound, and often negative, impact on students (Takayama, 2008). Students at Waiʻanae High School have many talents and strengths; however, statistics about their academic achievement are dismal.

The purpose of this study was to understand from the student perspective how to better support students. Rather than focusing on deficits and identifying why students are not successful, I wanted to develop a strengths-based narrative by highlighting successful approaches. This dissertation aimed to answer the following research questions through an exploration of alumni experiences:

- How can teachers better support the needs of Native Hawaiian students at Waiʻanae High School?
- What learning experiences at Waiʻanae High School were most effective in contributing to student growth?

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1. How can teachers better support the needs of Native Hawaiian students at Waiʻanae High School?

In regards to the first research question, three broad themes emerged to describe how teachers could better support the needs of students. Students feel supported when teachers foster supportive relationships, facilitate relevant learning experiences, and maintain rigorous expectations. Even though each student has unique experiences that shape how they learn, these key elements can help support growth and learning.

Fostering Supportive Relationships.

The power of the connection I experienced with June and with my grandmother through practicing the weaving, singing, and sharing stories cannot be captured by mere words

> because it is something intangible, yet so real – something that flowed through each of us and drew us closer together and left us wanting more. (Villegas, 2008, p. 76)

Despite being difficult to explain and thus sometimes hard to help others do, as Villegas (2008) shares, building relationships can be so powerful. Having a meaningful connection with a teacher engages students in learning and can motivate them to persevere when faced with challenges (Deiro, 1996; Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). As one participant shared, "I do a lot better when I feel that one-on-one connection…The teacher who is working one-on-one with the student is motivating the student because they think wow this person is really getting to know me and wants me to succeed."

Developing a supportive relationship begins with knowing the learner. Knowing the learner is much more than simply knowing students' names and interests. In order to establish meaningful connections, students want to see teachers as more than someone who stands in front of the class and delivers instruction. Students feel connected to teachers who they see "more than just a teacher but as an actual person" and with whom they can relate. Participant 2NR.1 said:

> If you see them as a person and they understand you, a lot more trust is there so we respond a lot more to what they tell us and we retain more of what they teach us because we trust them on that level.

Teachers who get to know students also understand how to identify unique needs of individual students, which in turn allows teachers to support students in ways that meet those specific needs. In order to understand unique student needs, it is important to become familiar with students' strengths and weaknesses.

Demmert (2011) discusses the importance of both social and emotional support in the development of academic competency. Teaching the whole child is a key component of

culturally relevant pedagogy. When students see that teachers want to know them as individuals beyond the classroom, it can have "tremendous power to motivate and invite learning" (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 77). Teachers must know students to build a community that fosters learning in order to address the diverse needs of individual learners. My interview data supports existing research (Villegas, 2008; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Kawakami, 1999) regarding the importance of relationships in education.

In addition to making meaningful connections with students, teachers should also foster relationships between students. Creating an environment that nurtures collaboration encourages students to connect with each other and develops support systems within the classroom. In Hawaiian culture, interdependence and connection to family and community are important to building relationships that support learning (Kana'iaupuni, 2004; Kawakami, 1999). 'Ohana (family) and building relationships are often more important than individual success and may be a prerequisite to learning. My study supports the importance of building 'ohana to student learning. Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) state, "We communicate with others as a means of expressing thoughts, sharing our experiences, and creating and accessing knowledge, both general and situated" (p. 78). Participants were motivated and encouraged by peers in their classes, and collaborating with groups was preferred over completing tasks individually. As participant 4NR shared, "Those kinds of assignments make me feel better about myself and more positive about the assignment because then it's a group effort not just one person doing it on their own and failing on their own." Having opportunities to share ideas, work through difficult assignments, and get feedback from peers was valuable and positively impacted participants' learning.

Incorporating Relevant Content and Experiences. Formal school experiences are often disconnected from Native Hawaiian, and other indigenous, ways of knowing. "The context of school learning is often different from that of informal learning and often unrelated to the child's culture. Bringing the relevance of the text to the child's own experience helps the child make sense of the world*"* (Au & Jordan, 1981, pp. 149-150). Educational experiences most aligned to learning styles commonly preferred by "Indigenous youth" tend to be hands-on, connected to real-life, and embedded in direct experiences and real-world activities (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008, p. 954). My findings indicate that students at Waiʻanae High School are more engaged in learning when the teacher is able to connect learning to relevant and meaningful experiences. The characteristics that make a learning experience relevant vary from person to person.

One way teachers can make learning relevant is by making connections between the content and experiences with which students are familiar or interested. When a lesson started from a familiar place, and new knowledge could build upon existing knowledge, participants felt they learned better. One participant said, "If you do something that makes a connection to what the textbook is saying then I think that's when you learn the most." By using examples to which students can relate, teachers make content more accessible, especially when new material is challenging.

Students are more motivated to learn when teachers are passionate about what they are teaching. As participant 4NR explained, "When I would feel most engaged in a project or assignment it was always because the teacher was passionate about what they were teaching." When teachers seemed uninterested or disengaged during a lesson, my findings suggest that students did not feel like learning is worthwhile. Teachers convey passion through both verbal

and nonverbal cues. When teachers are enthusiastic and seem excited to teach a lesson, participants were more engaged in learning.

Connecting content to real-world experiences is another way teachers can support learning for students, because "kids here generally learn more from hands-on experiences than just giving papers or reading from books" (Participant 1PHS). Participants communicated that applying skills and knowledge to practical experiences, either during field studies or projects, enhanced their learning. Having an opportunity to apply knowledge and skills reinforces learning to make it stick and also helps to abstract concepts easier to comprehend.

Maintaining Rigorous Expectations. In maintaining rigorous expectations, teachers "validate learners' knowledge construction, and empower learners' individual and collective learning capacity" (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 78). "The culturally relevant teacher simply does not accept failure, but begins where students are and works hard to help them succeed" (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 78). Students may not perceive themselves as capable learners, especially when faced with new, challenging concepts. However, when a teacher compels students to pursue the challenge and provides support along the way, students gain confidence and persevere. According to my findings, teachers can support learning by maintaining high expectations and being willing to give time and support as students work toward achieving challenging goals. As one participant explained when asked how him teachers helped him be successful:

> They pushed me and made sure I was on track. Like Ms. G, I wasn't doing so well in AP English because reading is the hardest thing for me. But, she would always push me to try my best and she would always keep me on track. She was always there for me when I

needed help. Now I think the literature books, like To Kill a Mockingbird and Frankenstein, were good (Participant 1IET).

Research Question 2. What learning experiences at Waiʻanae High School were most effective in contributing to student growth?

Each student comes to school with unique experiences that influence learning. For the purpose of this study, I tried to capture diverse perspectives by selecting participants that represent a cross-section of the student population. Despite differences in interests and learning styles, a few key attributes of effective learning experiences surfaced from the data.

Collaborative learning. Kanaʻiaupuni (2004) states, "Hawaiian culture promotes interdependence and strong families, the backbone of our people." Most participants preferred collaborative learning experiences to individual assignments. Working with others helped participants feel more confident and helped them grow as they built on strengths of the group. As participant 4NR shared, her teachers could have improved by incorporating more group work because working with others "gives me more confidence in my answers." Other participants preferred activities where "everyone is family driven" and "everyone's involved" (Participant 1IET).

Applied learning. The opportunity to apply conceptual knowledge in relevant, real-world settings was also described by participants as "helpful" because "they actually got to interact and experience what they were learning about" (Participant 2NR.1). Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) discuss the importance of connecting new knowledge to familiar experiences. School is often disconnected from a student's natural way of learning and hands-on application helps to make information relevant.

Rigorous, engaging tasks. Finally, participants felt they learned more when engaged in tasks that pushed them. When asked about an engaging experience that she learned from, Participant 1B explained:

> I would say calculus…I totally wanted to learn it because it was a challenge for me. Every other math class I had was kind of easy, so they were ok. But, this was actually something for the first time I had to pay attention. I had to follow the lessons; I had to ask for help. I think I finally felt like I was completely learning and completely growing as a student.

Participants spoke of the experiences where they felt challenged as being valuable because they knew they were learning something important. When tasks were not demanding, participants did not feel they were worthy of much effort and did not feel they learned much.

Supportive teacher. When participants described learning experiences they were often connected to a specific teacher. In most cases, when asked what kinds of assignments or lessons helped them learn best, participants would describe what the teacher did and how the class responded. Participants discussed specific activities without mentioning a teacher in only a few instances. This suggests that teachers have an impact on the effectiveness of learning activities and the efficacy of the teacher will affect how well students learn. As Hanushek (2010) states, "Teachers are very important; no other measured aspect of schools is nearly as important in determining student achievement" (p. 467).

Impact of Findings

Education reform policies have compelled underperforming schools to adopt various initiatives in an effort to improve student achievement. Although these reform initiatives seek to improve learning, many of the programs do not fully address needs of indigenous students and in

some cases hinder student growth. At Waiʻanae High School, where Native Hawaiian students make up the majority, student growth is minimal and the initiatives implemented thus far have not adequately influenced student achievement. Rather than continuing to force students to adjust to a model of education that does not seem to fit, schools and teachers should look for ways to better meet needs of students. My findings offer possible ways to better address student needs from the student perspective.

Implications for practice. My findings indicate that relationships, relevance, and rigor are elements of teaching and learning that students find supportive. McNulty and Quaglia (2007) state, "Yet these elements — rigor, relevance and relationships — together provide the hallmark for education today. The three are integrally connected; if one is missing in our teaching practices, we are not doing our best to prepare students for success in school and in life" (p. 18). The Rigor/Relevance Framework developed by the International Center for Leadership in Education is a tool used to "examine curriculum, instruction, and assessment" that is based on "two dimensions of higher standards and student achievement" (International Center for Leadership in Education, 2010, p. 1). Rigor and relevance intersect to form four quadrants that describe how knowledge and thinking are applied in instruction and assessment. "Good instruction is not a choice of a single quadrant but a balance" (McNulty & Quaglia, 2007, p. 19). Teachers should create experiences for students that include the development of knowledge and also the opportunity to apply knowledge to new situations and evaluate that knowledge and outcomes of application.

While my findings are consistent with elements of the Rigor/Relevance framework, it is important that best practices like implementing rigor, relevance, and relationships be grounded in context and culture especially in Hawaiʻi, and particularly in Waiʻanae. "Increasingly, data and

practice in indigenous communities demonstrate the importance of culturally relevant education as a means of engaging and empowering students and their families in the learning process" (Kanaʻiaupuni, Ledward, & Jensen, 2010, p. 2). Based on findings and empirical research, the framework should include building relationships first, then creating relevant learning experiences, which in turn leads to opportunities for increased rigor.

Recently, the Hawaiʻi Board of Education released Nā Hopena Aʻo, which outlines six outcomes for students developed by the "BOE Advisory Policy Work Group" (Hawaiʻi State Department of Education, 2015a, p. 1). "What makes Hawaiʻi, Hawaiʻi - a place unlike anywhere else - are the unique values and qualities of the indigenous language and culture" (Nā Hopena Aʻo Statement, 2015). Nā Hopena Aʻo, also called the HĀ framework, are six outcomes built on the foundation that students need both social and emotional learning. Teachers and other adults in the Department of Education are models of the behaviors so students know what they look like in practice and to help strengthen these outcomes in every student. Rigor, relevance and relationships are embedded in these six outcomes, but it a unique way. These six outcomes can be applied as a framework for a progression of practices, and building a classroom where students are engaged in the learning process. Each of the outcomes builds upon the one before it. The context of these unique "values and qualities" and of the culture in Hawaiʻi make implementation of the rigor/relevance framework different with students from Hawaiʻi and, therefore, Waiʻanae.

The first of the six outcomes in Nā Hopena Aʻo is building a strengthened sense of belonging. "The Hawaiian worldview stresses relationships first. It is spiritual, giving, and intimately bound to the land and genealogy. This worldview is a source of resilience and strength" (Kanaʻiaupuni, 2004, p. 30). The rigor/relevance framework does not explicitly

indicate that relationships are a key component to successful implementation. However, McNulty and Quaglia (2007) stated, "Schools across the country are realizing that rigor and relevance develop most naturally when they are cultivated on firm grounding in relationships" (para. 21). Positive relationships that are "deliberately nurtured" allow for increased student success because students are willing to rise to higher expectations when "students believe the staff genuinely cares about them" (McNulty & Quaglia, 2007, para. 24). In Hawaiian culture as stated by Kanaʻiaupuni, relationships are the starting point of any endeavor. In order for teachers to be effective in classrooms in Hawaiʻi, they should start with building relationships not just between themselves and their students but also within their classrooms between students. "Many students of color grow up in cultural environments where the welfare of the group takes precedence over the individual and where individuals are taught to pool their resources to solve problems" (Gay, 2002, p. 110).

While relationships are in important factor in student success in most classrooms, it is the nature of the relationships that are unique in the context of Hawaiʻi and Waiʻanae. My findings indicate that students do better when they develop strong connections to teachers they feel care about them beyond success in the classroom. good teachers are those who recognize individual student strengths and needs, and foster a sense of ʻohana in the classroom. The skills needed to foster these types of relationships are not necessarily innate, and are not always included in teacher education curricula. Teachers need opportunities to develop these skills and also build community with colleagues to support strengthened relationships across the school campus.

In Nā Hopena Aʻo, following the development of a strengthened sense of belonging is a strengthened sense of responsibility and then a strengthened sense of excellence. Successfully achieving these subsequent outcomes is largely dependent on the development of relationships in

the classroom. If meaningful relationships are not developed, students are not connected to anything for which they feel responsible. A strengthened sense of belonging, fostered by meaningful relationships, creates a collective to which students feel responsible and also a supportive network that allows the entire group to rise to excellence and achieve goals collaboratively. Teachers can foster relationships by maintaining rigorous expectations and building each student up to develop a strengthened sense of excellence.

Nā Hopena Aʻo provides a framework for teachers to use when designing curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Teachers should begin by building a strengthened sense of belonging and fostering relationships with and amongst students. Schools should support "bridging tightly interwoven social ties between adults and students" because these types of relationships "were found to be essential to improving student achievement" (Lee & Friedrich, 2007, p. 278). According to Pianta, Stuhlman, and Hamre (2002), "Facilitating the development of supportive adult-student relationships within the schools is a cost-effective option that requires minimal artificial manipulation on the part of interventions" (p. 92). Investing time and resources to the development of supportive relationships may result in improved student achievement and less need for behavior and academic interventions. The HĀ framework provides a foundation upon which to build supportive learning environments and experiences.

Implications for future research. The research questions in this study did not directly address culturally relevant pedagogy. My findings suggest that employing strategies aligned to culturally relevant pedagogy may have an impact on student achievement for Native Hawaiian students. Further studies specifically focused on the impact of culturally relevant pedagogy may provide more insight about how teachers can effectively use strategies to improve learning.

This study did not specifically address culture-based education. Only a few participants mentioned Hawaiian culture when discussing their own learning even though all were Native Hawaiian. The participants who mentioned Hawaiian culture were those in the natural resources pathway where Hawaiian language, protocol, and cultural practices are integrated into classes and other learning experiences. Native Hawaiian culture does not play an integral part in most of the other pathways at Waiʻanae High School so this may be the reason most students do not see the connections between culture and education. Because more than 60% of students at Waiʻanae High School are Native Hawaiian, it is important to understand the impact of culture on student learning. Further study of how culture based education affects student experiences should be explored.

Implications for Systems. Systems thinking takes into consideration the interdependence of multiple elements within a system (Jackson, 2003). The educational system is complex and improving student outcomes requires a multi-faceted approach. Decision makers throughout the system need to employ a systematic, complex thinking process to successfully address complicated issues. At the school level, positive change requires a thorough understanding of the relationships between each of the components that impact student experiences. Curriculum and instructional practices that are most effective for students need to be identified and developed. Training needs to be provided for teachers to ensure successful implementation of curriculum and instruction. School structures, such as schedules and course requirements, should support curricular and instructional approaches.

Implications for policy. According to my findings and existing research, culturally relevant pedagogy and culture-based education can be beneficial to student achievement (Au, 2009; Au & Jordan, 1981; Kanaʻiaupuni & Ledward, 2013; Kanaʻiaupuni, Ledward, & Jensen,

2010). Hawai‘i Board of Education Policy E3 provided a framework that is culturally responsive, but implementation of this policy varies across schools (Hawai‘i State Department of Education, 2015a). At Wai‘anae High School, teachers may be familiar with the student outcomes but they are not integral in curriculum and instruction. A more detailed plan is needed to ensure consistent implementation of Nā Hopena A‘o throughout the state. The Department of Education should specifically address the integration of Hawaiian history and culture, which is necessary to achieve a strengthened sense of Hawai‘i.

Personal Reflections

“E lawe i ke a‘o a mālama, a e ‘oi mau ka na‘auao.”

He who takes his teachings and applies them increases his knowledge. (Pukui, 1983)

This ‘olelo no‘eau (Hawaiian proverb) conveys the essence of my goal for all endeavors, including this research. As an educator, the value of being a lifelong learner is something I always tried to instill in my students. I was fortunate to have wonderful individuals throughout my life who modeled this value for me and helped to foster my own love of learning. Even though my grandparents did not finish high school, they valued education and made sure their children understood its importance as well. My parents believed that an education would open doors for my siblings and me, and they made sure each of us understood that. I believe the educational and professional path I have travelled was set for me by my kupuna and akua. Opportunities I could not have imagined or expected have been provided for me, and I had to trust that I was prepared for them for a reason.

After teaching for several years, I had the opportunity to earn a master’s degree through a cohort designed to grow teacher leaders on the Leeward coast by grounding the program in culture and community. I always knew that education needed to change in Wai‘anae, but for the

first time I began to recognize the need for culturally responsive methods in more classrooms. I started to understand why I was more inclined to learn in hula and Hawaiian language classes, or why I preferred collaboration to individual assignments. These experiences were better aligned to a way of knowing that was connected to my culture. Up until graduate school I did not realize that what I found effective in my own classroom were culturally relevant strategies, I just taught in ways I preferred to learn and my students did better.

Earning a college degree was an expectation. However, I never seriously considered pursuing a doctorate degree. While in the master's cohort, two of my professors said that we could and should continue on to become doctors. Sitting in that class I realized that if I wanted to make an impact on education in the Wai‘anae community, it was my responsibility to keep learning and growing as a student and a leader. When the chance to apply for the EdD program came up, I decided to apply not expecting to be accepted. I was excited and nervous when I received notification that I was selected to be apart of the second cohort of the program. I had no idea what was I was about to embark on and how fulfilling the journey would be. School has always been easy for me, but this program has pushed me to grow in so many ways. It has been truly a transformative endeavor. I see things in both my work, and my personal life, from such a different perspective now. My own growth and process for completing this study is similar in many ways to my findings. I had supportive colleagues and advisors who were instrumental to my learning. My desire to find the answers to my questions made learning the process for conducting a study and writing a dissertation very relevant. My success is in large part because of mentors and advisors who upheld high standards while urging me to persist and giving me the confidence to trust that I could get it done.

The ‘olelo no‘eau above captures the essence of what earning a doctorate degree means for me. Becoming a practitioner researcher has allowed me to continue growing as I apply all the learning and experience I have been given. I know now that having the title of doctor and three letters after my name will help me to apply all that I have learned in a much broader context. This degree gives me the ability to be a voice for others that are not always heard, despite being vital to the conversation. My kuleana (responsibility) is to continue to learn and be a role model for others so that I can foster that same love of learning in students and others with whom I work. Conducting this study and sharing what I learned from the voices of my participants is part of my fulfillment of that kuleana.

Appendix A – Consent Form

University of Hawai'i College of Education
Principal Investigator – Camille Hampton
Advisor - Dr. Walter Kahumoku, III
Committee Members - Dr. Lori Ideta, Dr. Sylvia Hussey, Dr. Lei Aken

Agreement to Participate
University of Hawaii at Mānoa, College of Education, Doctorate in Educational Practice Dissertation
Meeting the Needs of Students at Wai'anae High School through the use of Culture-Based Education

Aloha. I am a doctoral student in the College of Education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and am conducting a research study to examine how to better meet the needs of students at Wai'anae High School. I am inviting you to participate in this study because your experiences can provide valuable information to inform current and future program practices.

Activities and Time Commitment: If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed individually and/or with a focus group. Interviews will last between 1-2 hours and will be audio recorded with your permission so it may be transcribed and analyzed later. The discussions will be informal; think of this as a time to share and talk story about your experiences with Wai'anae High School.

Benefits and Risks: While you will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study, your participation is meaningful and will contribute to a better understanding of how your experiences have impacted your success. There is little to no risk to you in participating in this project. If at any time during the interviews you are uncomfortable with any questions, we will skip the question, or take a break, or stop the interview, or you may choose to withdraw from the study.

Confidentiality and Privacy: During this research project, all data from the surveys and interviews will be kept in a secured location. Only we will have access to this data, although legal authorized agencies, including the University of Hawai'i Human Studies Program, have the right to review the research records.

After the interviews are transcribed, audio recordings will be destroyed. No names or other personally identifiable information will be used in this research project. You will be provided a copy of the transcript for review, edit, and/or comment.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this research study is voluntary. You can choose freely to participate or not. In addition, at any point during this project, you can withdraw without any penalty or loss.

Questions: If you have any questions about this project, please contact me by phone at 808-780-7852, or email at camillet@hawaii.edu. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Walter Kahumoku, III at wakahumo@ksbe.edu, or committee members Dr. Lori Ideta at ideta@hawaii.edu, Dr. Sylvia Hussey at sylvia3@hawaii.edu, or Dr. Lei Aken at gaken@hawaii.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, in this project, you can contact the University of Hawai'i, Human Studies Program, by phone at (808) 956-5007 or by email at uhirb@hawaii.edu.

If you agree to participate in this project, please complete the bottom portion of this form and return it to me.

Mahalo,

Complete and return bottom portion of form

Signature for Consent:

I agree to participate in the research project entitled, Meeting the Needs of Native Hawaiian Students at Wai'anae High School study. I understand that I am can withdraw from participating in this project at any time by notifying the researchers.

Name (Print): _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please check the box below to consent to audio recording of individual and focus group interviews. Audio recordings will be destroyed after transcription is completed.

□ I allow audio recordings of my interviews.

Appendix B - Recruitment Script /Email

Aloha,

My name is Camille Hampton and I am a doctoral student in the College of Education at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I am conducting research to study how to better meet the needs of students at Wai‘anae High School. I am inviting you to participate in this study because you are *a/an alumni/teacher* (choose one) from Wai‘anae High School.

Participation will include a focus group/individual interview. If you agree to participate your total time commitment will be between 1 and 2 hours. Participation is completely voluntary and your answers will be anonymous.

If you have any questions, or would like to participate in the research, I can be reached by email at camillet@hawaii.edu or by phone at (808) 780-7852.

Mahalo,
Camille Hampton

Appendix C - Interview Guides

Interview Questions for Alumni

1. What types of learning experiences allowed you to grow?
2. How did your teachers support you to help you be successful after high school?
3. How did teachers engage you in the learning process?
4. Why were some teachers more effective at engaging students?
5. What teachers were most effective at contributing to your growth?

Interview Questions for Teachers

1. What learning experiences contribute most to student growth?
2. How do you support students to support their growth?
3. How do you engage your students in the learning process?
4. How do you foster positive relationships with students?
5. How can teachers better meet the needs of students at Waianae High School?

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